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THE ECONOMIC FRONT

FOR the second time since the formation of the Government of all Parties a partial reorganisation of the Cabinet Committees dealing with economic questions has taken place. Official comments again talk of tightening up organisation and speeding up arms production. In this new round of the traditional Ministerial game Mr. Greenwood is left out as old maid—or at least seconded for what should be the important job of planning (in some undefined relation with Lord Reith) for post-war reconstruction. Mr. Greenwood was Chairman of the two War Cabinet Committees to whom the application of the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act was entrusted. These powers were the token of popular enthusiasm and determination; they were unanimously voted by Parliament, which was ready to give absolute powers to the Executive to harness property and man-power for the war. Mr. Greenwood was given the opportunity to assemble round him a strong economic general staff. Of these two Committees, the Economic Policy Committee seldom met. In the Production Council central planning never had a chance. It deteriorated into a platform where the various departments fought out their uncoordinated plans and, later, where one department was attacked by all the others because of its piratical activities which threatened their work. The Economic General Staff remained an economic seminar and statistical service. In the autumn more departmental Ministers were promoted into the War Cabinet, further complicating the central direction of the economic front. The supremacy of the Treasury reasserted itself. A great opportunity was missed.

The new reorganisation provides for two Executive Committees—Production and Imports. The Chairmen of these are departmental Ministers. There is no independent co-ordination or central planning body. The logical form of organisation by which a member of the War Cabinet without portfolio would preside over Committees composed of departmental heads still eludes us. Instead we have interlocking Ministerial Committees working under a War Cabinet which contains some, but not all, of the chiefs of the subordinate departments. The other Committees created last May are not dissolved, and Sir John Anderson remains Chairman of a nebulous Committee which stands somewhere between the two Executive Committees and the War Cabinet. The arrangement seems too complex and confused.

This reorganisation has had a cold reception; papers as far apart as the *Times* and the *Daily Herald* have condemned it. The exception is the recently honoured *Daily Telegraph*. Eight months after the formation of Mr. Churchill's Government the economic machine certainly ought to be working at full speed. Big Business has obstructed; its idea of reorganisation is to transfer its monopolistic control to Whitehall and there to maintain itself in greater power and with increased capital assets during the war, with the prospect of almost untrammelled power after the war. In this scheme Labour leaders are given Government posts and Trade Union officials propitiated, though the rank and file may be forgotten. This is a testing situation for the Labour leaders, but at a time when the country has overwhelmingly demanded "equality of sacrifice" and conferred the fullest powers on the Government, there is no reason why Labour Ministers should be defected. Much of the trouble arises over the word "compulsion." No one suggests dragooning the public. Mr. Bevin rightly desires as little conscription as possible and asks for compulsion of property as the necessary condition for further compulsion of labour. Our only complaint is that he says this and then seems to stop short of action. His words imply drastic planning which impartially disregards vested interests and provides safeguards for the weak. Let the State itself take over great monopolies, and, where that is not necessary or immediately practicable, compel employers to produce what is necessary in the most efficient way without allowing them to extort undue profits and advantages at the expense of the consumer. On that basis, and only on that basis, will a greater measure of compulsion be welcomed by the rank and file. Even so, compulsion does not mean conscripting the population. What it does mean is that a man who loses his job, either because of enemy action or because it is no longer a necessary job, should receive fair compensation—this vital point is fully provided for by the Nazis in their war economy—on condition that he undertakes or trains for another job indicated to him. The body which decides must include people with local knowledge and appreciation of the needs of individuals who are now, in the absence of this open admission of compulsion, subject to the gravest hardships and left to find, on their own initiative, work which may not be that which the war effort most needs.

The discontent which is blowing up towards a storm and which will find expression in the country as well as in Parliament is not based on Mr. Bevin's proper remarks to "friends of the employers," as a strong supporter of Mr. Bevin suggests in his useful article in this issue. It is based on the high hopes that the country has entertained of Mr. Bevin and his colleagues. To-day, social discrepancies are much harsher than they were last May. In consumption, living conditions, education, and social security the position of the poorer classes has grown worse in relation to the position of the well-to-do. It is not much use to use strong words to employers and talk of a better world in the future for the masses: the thing is to make a start now, during the war.

Morally at War

Mr. Roosevelt's address to Congress was a statement of policy as resolute and eloquent as his "fire-side talk." It was in the now familiar key of all his recent pronouncements, for it was a warning that the Nazis aim not merely at subjugating Europe but at dominating the world. Morally, it fell little short of a declaration of war, as the Japanese press pointed out. He was not content to pledge the "full support" of the United States to "those resolute peoples" whose resistance is "keeping the war away from this hemisphere": he went on to declare that:

> the United States is committed to the proposition that the principles of morality and considerations of her own security would never permit her to acquiesce in a peace dictated by aggressors and sponsored by appeasers.

This is strong language, and the words were evidently carefully chosen. Does it mean, as we think it does, that in no circumstances will the United States allow us to be crushed? Or does it mean that if we should be crushed, the United States would still remain the non-belligerent foe of the Axis? On the former interpretation, why should she confine her help to acting as our "arsenal"? In his wireless talk, Mr. Roosevelt based this limitation of her support on the fact that we have not asked her to send an army to Europe. Certainly, we do not need and could not use it now, nor is such an army ready. On this point Americans may in time change their minds. However that may be, it is clear that a formal declaration of war by America would alter the whole prospect in Europe, for it would shake the confidence of the Nazis in victory and bring to the conquered peoples an assurance of their eventual liberation. It would also give us naval aid that we sorely need to protect our Atlantic shipping and facilitate the control of America's industrial effort.

Rationing

The Ministry of Food is losing some of the good reputation it earned in the early part of the Blitz and its case is not always helped by the homilies delivered by Lord Woolton. The latest order of the Ministry prescribes maximum prices for a large number of foodstuffs and further orders are to come shortly. This fixing of maximum prices indicates that free purchasing power is driving up the price of short supplies and that the economic price would be established at a higher level. The maximum price is an artificial one which does nothing in itself to remedy the situation. The shortage in relation to effective demand still exists and the result is either first come, first served, or that kissing goes by favour. Publication of the maximum price order advertises the shortage and gives licensed and well-to-do people a start over the rest of the population. The logical supplement to maximum prices is rationing. There are objections to extended rationing, the chief being that outside the range of the staple essentials tastes and needs diverge and rationing stereotypes these diverse demands. Thus the rationing of cheese would give people a claim to cheese which some do not wish to exercise. A part of this group will exercise their claim because they will argue that they might as well have what is going. Others will not take up their ration and this abstention which will fluctuate from week to week will complicate the problem of allocation. Could not a compromise be effected? Let Fridays, Saturdays, Mondays and Tuesdays be ration days. On these days people must purchase the rationed commodities. If the cheese ration is ¼ lb. it must be bought during the four rationing days. Wednesdays and Thursdays would be open days. Grocers would put out notices indicating that a surplus of cheese on the week's allocation was available for open buying. This method would introduce an element of freedom which overcomes the objection to rigid rationing. Some such flexible rationing of this kind may have to be combined with a system of point or value rationing or even a definite limitation of gross expenditure.

The Libyan Victory

The capture of Bardia was one of those rare military events that bring happiness to all concerned. The British wanted to take the place: they took it. The Italians wanted to be out of the war: they are prisoners. The operations were as swift and well-planned as at Sidi Barrani: once more the team-work of army, air force and navy was perfect: once more the Australians showed their traditional dash, whenever the enemy awaited their onset. Our casualties were under 600. The place was well-fortified, for the Italians are good engineers, but its garrison had no will to defend it, and three generals of the Blackshirt Militia deserted. General Wavell's forces have now accounted in prisoners and casualties for over 90,000 men, a third of the whole army of Libya. They are now pushing on rapidly to Tobruk, a place less easy to defend than Bardia. As both these little towns have serviceable ports, our army can be readily provisioned by sea, if it is our intention to push on to the high plateau of Cyrenaica, a fertile region with a population of Italian settlers, to which Nature has been kinder than to the deserts in which we have so far operated. This campaign is a perfect illustration of the kind of offensive operations that are within our capacity while our manpower is still many times inferior to that of the enemy. Libya was an easy prey, not merely because the Italians were demoralised, but chiefly because our command of the sea enabled us to isolate it, and so to achieve a local superiority. Other opportunities of the same kind may present themselves as the year goes on. Could we, for example, effect a landing in Sardinia or Sicily? Either exploit would have an immense effect on Italy's will to stay in the war. Technically, Sardinia may be the more promising of the two: politically, if we had with us a legion of Italian anti-Fascists, there is more to be said for Sicily with its memories of the landing of Garibaldi's Thousand

Germany's Next Move

Nazi propaganda is busy circulating rumours that point to some early German enterprise in the Balkans. The only definite fact is that the Bulgarian Premier, M. Filoff, went to Vienna to consult "a specialist," who may have been that expert psychologist, von Ribbentrop. The story goes that the Germans have demanded from Bulgaria facilities for the passage of an army destined to attack the Greeks in Thrace or Macedonia. Other rumours describe once more the concentration of this army in Rumania. It is even said that Germany has bought Russia's consent for this operation at Bulgaria's expense by giving her leave to take Finland and Moldavia. We are disinclined to believe any of these stories. The Germans are still so careful not to break with the Greeks that they have sent only planes but no pilots to help the Italians, who are still on the whole falling back in Albania, albeit very slowly. Nor can we believe that the Nazis would willingly present either Finland (where they now have some troops in the far North) or Moldavia. On the contrary, the news from Rumania suggests acute Russo-German friction. The Iron Guard has split, and its two sections are engaged in a sort of civil war. The "moderates" back Antonescu and enjoy German support: the Left is nationalist, claims to be in the Codreanu tradition, tends to be anti-German and is said to be permeated by disguised Communists. However this may be, the Communists are being hunted down. That Russia is watching events in Rumania is obvious, for she has sent a battleship up the Danube estuary to Sulina. We doubt whether Germany will throw her strength into the Balkan Peninsula, or any part of the Mediterranean area, unless she can acquire a fleet by pressure on France. If she moves southward at all, we think Spain the more probable direction. But her main effort will be against this island and our shipping.

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow only the publisher or newsagent with a permit to post printed matter to certain countries. Readers are free to post to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.
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WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE B.B.C. ?

Of late there has been some criticism of the B.B.C. and much speculation regarding its future. Some of the former is conceived in ignorance and much of the latter is deliberately propagated. All is far from well with the B.B.C., but before it is blamed for the content of its dull news bulletins and for the nature of its overseas propaganda, it should be realised where the final responsibility rests.

Before the war the B.B.C. enjoyed a very large measure of independence. Operating under a Royal Charter and licence, theoretically it was responsible to the Postmaster-General but in practice he left well alone, and in Parliament refused to be more than answerable for major questions of policy. The B.B.C. was controlled by a Board of Governors of seven appointed by the Government but not directly answerable to it, and the Administration was in the hands of a Director-General also appointed by the Government. There was a large General Advisory Committee and a number of specialised advisory committees which exercised no definite control. The real power was always the Director-General. The Corporation worked well enough in peacetime, the catholic composition of the Board of Governors ensuring against any startling innovations in policy. The internal politics of the B.B.C. were only aired when some *cause célèbre* caught the public eye, some political party had a grievance or the toes of a powerful vested interest were trodden upon.

When war came, with the minimum of explanation the Board of Governors was reduced to two—the Chairman and Vice-Chairman—thus losing its comparatively representative character. The powers formerly vested in the Postmaster-General were transferred to the Ministry of Information, to whom the B.B.C. had now to submit its financial estimates. These fundamental changes in the constitution of the Corporation have had far-reaching effects and to them many of the deficiencies of the country's broadcasting system can be traced.

The reduction of the Board to two immediately enhanced the influence of the Chairman. As Chairman of a Board of two he is obviously in a position to exercise far more power than he was over the larger and more catholic body. And so it has turned out. Few could name the Chairman of the B.B.C. to-day. Before the war the post could be ranked with Government directorships (of the Suez Canal for instance) which serve as useful pension supplements for retired government servants. When war came Sir Allan Powell was Chairman of the B.B.C. and found his influence greatly increased. In the last war he was in charge of the refugee camp at Earl's Court and later was clerk to the Metropolitan Asylums Board and organised the L.C.C.'s new department of Public Assistance, and has held seats or occupied the Chair in various Government and public bodies. When appointed Chairman of the B.B.C. in 1939 he was Mayor of Kensington. Vice-Chairman is Capt. C. H. G. Millis, Managing Director of Baring Brothers. To these two the Director-General, Mr. F. W. Ogilvie, has to work. He can easily find himself outvoted two to one.

Such was the result of the contraction of the Board. Equally important were the results of the transfer of the Postmaster-General's powers to the Ministry of Information. Under the licence the Postmaster-General had the right to control broadcast material. He could demand that certain things be broadcast, veto others and generally exercise control over programmes. This he had never done, but no sooner were these powers transferred to the Ministry of Information than they were used. The Ministry, considering itself responsible for all propaganda, decided that everything broadcast outside of entertainment should come under its general control.

On top of this there is the censorship. Like the press the B.B.C. is subject to voluntary censorship. Theoretically it can broadcast what it wishes outside of military matters, but in practice, as has been explained in Parliament, the B.B.C. is subject to a much more severe censorship and broadcasts nothing in its news, except routine matters, which has not been passed by the appropriate service department, the Ministry of Information, the Foreign Office or some other Ministry concerned with the broadcast. Everything has to come through the Ministry, and even if the B.B.C. news department receives it direct it must resubmit it to the Ministry before using it.

In addition to control by the Ministry of Information there is the financial control of the Treasury. Previously to the war the B.B.C. received a fixed percentage of the wireless licence revenue and the income from its publications. Now it must submit estimates to the Ministry of Information to approve for submission to the Treasury. New expenditure must therefore be approved first by the Ministry of Information and then by the Treasury. This makes for neither speedy nor progressive action. From practical independence, subject only to general responsibility to the Postmaster-General, the B.B.C. is now responsible at least to three masters: the Board of Governors, the Ministry of Information and the Treasury. And it has to work within the restrictions of a very severe censorship.

In other words, the Corporation has, in practice, ceased to be independent. If the propaganda of the country is to be co-ordinated and uniform this may be necessary, but at present it works against the B.B.C. providing a speedy and interesting news service. The dullness of its news bulletins is largely the responsibility of the Minister who, unfortunately, appears to favour the daily press at the expense of speed. On occasion, by holding up news so that it would not be broadcast before it appeared in the morning newspapers, the Minister has enabled Lord Haw-Haw to broadcast it from Germany before it was known here. Instances are the Cabinet changes made last spring and changes in the R.A.F. Command more recently. The B.B.C. news should either be as free from control as the press and be able to build up its own news-collecting service, or recognised as the official spokesman and be so treated. It is absurd that the B.B.C. has never been granted membership of the press galleries in Parliament and so must rely on news agency reports for Parliamentary debates.

Not least of the results of the Ministry of Information control is the ending of the Corporation's immunity to Parliamentary questions. The Minister of Information is answerable to Parliament and must reply to questions of detail, although the Postmaster-General had always refused to answer any but general questions relating to policy. Where a Minister is directly responsible for his department and has a permanent Civil Service under him he need have no fear of Parliamentary questions. When, however, the Minister is responsible at one remove for a department which has previously enjoyed independence and which is not administered by the Civil Service he is more likely to consider that department responsible for its failings. As a consequence it will develop fear of the revealing Parliamentary question, and fear breeds excessive caution. That has certainly happened in the case of the B.B.C. since it has become aware that any one of its routine actions may become the subject of a Parliamentary question and that it will have to answer to the Minister. Control of this type invites timidity.

These multiple controls have been imposed upon an organisation which was designed for independence. The Corporation needs to be either organised on Civil Service lines with its permanent officials responsible to the Minister or remain independent in detailed administration and only responsible on large matters of policy. The B.B.C. with all the advantages of the independent public corporation has become subject to the same form of governmental control as a Government department. Divided loyalties have been created. And it doesn't work. It has developed all the disadvantages of the Civil Service, red tape and departmentalisation, without the advantages of the direct responsibility of the Civil Service. As Government control is obviously necessary in wartime the organisation needs to be simplified. The Board of Governors should be swept away. It is an anachronism and there is no justification for its continuance. It is absurd that two men directly responsible to no one should be in a position to control a Director-General of a public Corporation. The Director-General would be directly responsible to the Ministry of Information in the same way as a permanent secretary would be responsible to his Minister. And since the Minister of Information has so many eggs in his basket a strong case could be made for an under secretary of state of the Ministry being made responsible for broadcasting affairs. Above all, let him be someone who knows something of broadcasting and not just a "business man" brought in from outside.

The essence of a successful broadcasting system at the present time is the content of the propaganda sent into the ether both for home and overseas consumption. In connection with this last much criticism has arisen. For its overseas services, as for its home programmes, the B.B.C. is subject to the control of the Ministry of Information. They are organised in collaboration with it and the propaganda sent out is in accordance with directives received from the Ministry. Whether the content of the overseas services is good or not largely depends upon the propaganda policy of the Government as interpreted by the Ministry of Information. The B.B.C. overseas services have reflected the refusal of the Government to embark upon the policy of exploiting the anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist forces in Europe. As has often been argued in these columns the war cannot be won without the encouragement of revolutionary movements in Europe and they cannot be encouraged unless the promise of a social and economic revolution is held out by this country. Once that becomes

Government policy the B.B.C. overseas services can broadcast the hope of a new world to its audience in enemy and enemy-occupied countries. To-day it cannot do so because it is against Government policy. The Vansittart broadcasts, for instance, which have been criticised here, are the very opposite of such a policy. But they stand out in contrast to much of the overseas propaganda of the Corporation. Priestley, for instance, still broadcasts to America and the Empire. It is suggested that control of the B.B.C. overseas services should be handed over to the Foreign Office. Already, presumably, the Ministry of Information directives on foreign policy are derived from the Foreign Office, but whether that is so or not the Foreign Office has shown itself no greater believer in the social revolution than Sir Robert Vansittart. The danger of Foreign Office control is that there would be more of the Vansittart and less of the Priestley type of broadcast. The purge needed may be less among the B.B.C. overseas staff than in the rooms of the Foreign Office. The pressure to end the Priestley home postscripts did not come from the B.B.C., as Mr. Priestley has himself made clear, but from certain Government and near-Government circles. The B.B.C. resisted, and the first attempt to dislodge Mr. Priestley failed. Those closely associated with the B.B.C. know there is criticism in some political and Government quarters for it being socialistic, but little for it being reactionary. The same applies to Parliamentary and press criticism. The demand for Foreign Office control may well be to ensure that nothing creeps into overseas programmes that is not entirely in harmony with the views of the 1922 Committee.

There is need for reform in the B.B.C. overseas services. They have expanded rapidly, but have often lacked an understanding of the audiences to whom they are addressed. But it should be remembered that the B.B.C. employs refugees, including those classified as enemy aliens, because foreign services cannot be fully effective without employing those to whom the languages are native. Foreign Office control might well result in a reduction of, if not a total ban on, the employment of aliens by the B.B.C.

When internal reorganisation of the B.B.C. took place last spring it might well have been better to appoint as Controller of Overseas Services someone more experienced in foreign affairs than the Corporation's Controller of Public Relations, Sir Stephen Tallents. Also, when the transmitting stations of our Allies passed into German hands, immediate orders should have been placed for a large number of high-powered transmitters, and in America if necessary.

By and large, the B.B.C. fails where the Ministry of Information fails and the Ministry fails where the Government fails in its propaganda policy. To change the personnel of the B.B.C. and bring it into closer co-operation with the Government departments concerned, advantageous as it might be in some respects, would not get at the main trouble. The main trouble is the national problem of Government policy and not the local one of B.B.C. organisation.

SALARIED STATE MEDICAL SERVICE—II

SINCE the first article on the Medical Service was written the British Medical Association has announced the setting up of a Medical Commission " to study wartime developments and their effects on the country's medical services, both present and future." This was amplified by the Chairman of the B.M.A. Council when he said that the time had come for the profession to give serious consideration to the problem of medical reconstruction in the post-war era.

At the same time, the rival and much smaller organisation, the Medical Practitioners' Union, admitting the " slow extinction " of private practice, has produced proposals for a salaried medical service.

Talk about the " Mississippi just rolling on " ! It is more than that ; it is in spate ; it has overflowed the levees that the medical profession and effete traditionalism have built, higher and higher in the past, against the inrush of State medicine. The B.M.A.'s feverish sand-bagging and clay-plugging with its " General Medical Policy for the Nation " just before the war, was a last and foredoomed effort.

According to a frank leader in the *British Medical Journal*, the Medical Commission is starting with a clean slate. A body of seventy members, with such widely separated outlooks as the Royal College of Physicians on the Right and the Socialist Medical Association members on the Left, looks a bit ponderous. It is not so much a " Commission " as a " Convocation," but it at least has the merit of being representative of every side of the profession—the private practitioners and voluntary hospitals on one side and the public health services and municipal hospitals on the other. It will be concerned, in full assembly, with the discussion of hard facts produced by the various committees and sub-committees which, from within the profession, will do what P.E.P. did in its Health Services inquiry, which was a remarkable piece of documentation, although its conclusions were non-committal. Those of the Medical Commission may be even more so.

But the Ministry of Health and the Department of Health for Scotland are to appoint observers. I have a shrewd suspicion that Mr. Malcolm MacDonald was looking to the post-war reconstruction of the medical services when, with commendable judgment, he appointed Sir Wilson Jameson as Chief Medical Officer of Health. Sir Wilson was Dean of the London School of Hygiene, a forthright critic of the things-that-are, and highly enlightened and able. He is to be relied upon as the architect of a new medical system.

" War has thrown up into sharp relief," says the *British Medical Journal*, " the deficiencies of our peace-time system of administering relief and promoting and maintaining the health of the people."

The cracks which were obvious to anyone who studied our medical services before the war have now become gullies into which the ramshackle structure of backwoods medicine has toppled. The measure of the collapse is the very fact that all sides of medicine have agreed to the Commission. There is no more fervent exponent of social security than the once-prosperous practitioner whose gilt-edged practice has disappeared.

A few weeks ago, I went to speak to a seaside division of the B.M.A. I went armed with Samson's jaw-bone to smite them hip and thigh, because so much of the reaction against any radical reconstruction used to come from the resort and spa practitioners who ministered to the valetudinarian geese who laid the golden eggs. Instead of smiting I had to offer solace. Out of seventy doctors only fourteen had remained as a " medical garrison." Some had gone into retirement. Some had volunteered for the Services. Some had tried to follow their fugitive practices. Doctors who would have boasted a practice worth £2,000 or more a year were glad of the £500 a year guarantee which the B.M.A. had arranged for them through the Ministry of Health.

The doctors who remained were manning the A.R.P. First Aid Posts and carrying the panels of the absentees. They had their own permanent panel and another register for temporary panel patients, for whom half the capitation fees went to their original doctor. Under the scheme, those panel patients were to be handed back after the war. This traffic in panel patients as though they were sheep is not a new thing. It has been a reprehensible feature of National Health Insurance ever since it started. It is medical simony—the " sale of the living." For the sale of medical practices is the financial foundation of a calling which all of us want to regard as noble.

When a young student, whose medical education has already cost about £1,500, wants to start his career he has to find money to buy a practice or a partnership. According to the nature of the practice, he may have to find one-and-a-half or two or three years' " purchase " —that is, he pays the equivalent of the income for these periods. A good-going panel would cost at least £1,000—he would " buy " the names on the register as an in-going grocer would buy the tins on his predecessor's shelves. And to find the money he has to mortgage his future, often on hard and disadvantageous terms. He, who has been taught that his vocation is a high-principled one, finds cruelly that it is a high-interest one.

Nowadays, in the bombed and the evacuation areas, private practices which were at once the doctor's capital and his pension, when re-sold on retirement, have been blasted sky-high. Families have gone to reception areas. Workers have been transferred to other centres of industry. And who will ever want to buy these practices ? The only hope for such doctors is that the State will become the Official Receiver.

There are a million and a half evacuees in the Reception Areas. Doctors in such areas are reaping the harvest of fees, although in the Spas evacuated Civil Servants cannot pay the pulse-holding fees of Lady Tomnoddy and Col. Hobnail-Liver, whose place they have taken in the hotels. According to the Ministry of Health scheme the local doctors are supposed to make use of the services of the doctors from evacuated districts, who will be guaranteed at least £500. I should like to know just how many evacuee doctors have been thus employed. All my information points to the what-we-have-we-hold attitude of reception-area doctors.

Another thing which mystifies me is the official excuse that war-services, such as the Shelter Medical Service, have been starved because of the shortage of doctors. On paper, the 48,000 doctors, of

whom about 19,000 are Panel practitioners, does not seem an awful lot when the needs of the Fighting Services, of A.R.P. and the Emergency Hospital Services and the disease-menaced Public Health Services are considered. But, judging by the complaints of penury and wasted ability of which I hear from private doctors, there must be a lack of co-ordination somewhere. I should like to see the Ministry of Health advertise its salaried medical services and see what the response would be. There is an ulterior motive in that suggestion because Lloyd George's threat to do just that broke the resistance of the medical profession to the Panel System in 1911. I learn that some use is at last to be made of the 600 refugee doctors in this country.

One thing is certain, doctors for the Shelter Medical Service will have to be found. There will have to be, when epidemics start, doctors on regular duty in each of the larger shelters every night, instead of the rota calls. And apropos of last week's article, I know now what the Minister of Health's reply would be if, as I suggested, he was subpoenaed by a Coroner in a case where a shelter doctor had said: "I told the patient to see the family doctor in the morning." It would be: "The doctor is there to give the treatment necessary. No consideration of his colleagues' fees can excuse him from failing to give his best attention to any shelter patient. We expect the doctors to develop, not restrict, the shelter service."

Consider another aspect of medical practice—the voluntary hospital. The voluntary hospital is an anachronism and a misnomer. It is propped up by charity but it is not "voluntary." In peacetime it is the job of the hospital almoner to see that every patient pays according to his means. The Hospital Savings Association collects over £1,000,000 a year from workers so that they and their dependants can be guaranteed hospital treatment. Of the 2,000,000 out-patients attending London voluntary hospitals (a figure which refutes the private doctor's sublimation of "Free Choice of Doctor") over 55 per cent. are H.S.A. And one in every five in-patients is admitted on an H.S.A. card. And there are the infernal flag-days and those big notices outside hospitals exposing their debts as the medieval beggars exposed their sores at the city gates. One big voluntary hospital actually sells space on its walls to advertise a proprietary medicine.

In spite of the Voluntary Hospitals Commission, with its attempt to rationalise the system and bring order out of chaos, in spite of the efforts of the King Edward Fund, in London, the voluntary system before the war was tottering to inevitable bankruptcy. The cost of modern treatment and of modern equipment, the need for providing decent hours and conditions for nurses, and the demands for the rebuilding of antiquated hospitals—the slums of medicine, was too great for charity. The London hospitals were already asking the L.C.C. to subsidise them—the L.C.C., which in ten years and in opposition to the voluntary hospitals had created out of seventy-six poor-law infirmaries and Metropolitan Asylums Board hospitals, the largest hospital service in the world.

The war has changed that in an unsatisfactory way. The Tory Government which devised the Emergency Medical Service was prepared to prop up the voluntary hospitals. The Emergency Medical Service is not a State service but a State-subsidised service. Voluntary hospitals are paid to reserve empty beds for casualties at rates which average about 3 guineas but can be as high as six or seven guineas a week for the bigger London hospitals. For the first time, probably, in their history many voluntary hospitals are banking money. In the same way the doctors are being paid "State honoraria" and pretending to keep their "amateur status."

Even more intolerable is the fact that the Government itself is "farming out" to voluntary hospitals the emergency hospital wards which it is building. Two of the biggest London voluntary hospitals—St. Thomas's and London—are actually renting, from the State, emergency wards which it has constructed in the grounds of L.C.C. hospitals. With one hand they take bed-money from the State; with the other they pay rent money to the State just to maintain the illusion of the voluntary system.

At the present time, the London voluntary hospitals are providing for barely one-twelfth of the numbers of patients (apart from casualties) which they took in before the war. The burden of the bulk of the civil sick has been transferred to the L.C.C. hospitals. It has the merit of breaking down any reservations which may have lingered in people's minds about municipal hospitals, the efficiency of which they will now understand at first-hand. That in itself is a blow to the voluntary system.

"The B.M.A. proposes now to prepare for the return of peace," says the *British Medical Journal*, "so that Medicine may be ready to meet its responsibilities in a world in which many values will be changed, fresh conceptions of society will be formed, and in which new stresses and strains will appear in the moral, material and economic fabric of democracy." Let us say "Amen" to that.

RITCHIE CALDER

MR. BEVIN'S CRITICS

[We print below an article by an experienced trade unionist who makes an interesting case for Mr. Bevin's policy. We discuss some of the complex issues involved on the front page of this issue.—ED. *N.S.&N.*]

CRITICISM of the work of the Rt. Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service, is now in full swing. Widely varying sections of the press—the *Sunday Express* and its daily counterpart, the *Daily Mail*, the staid *Times*, and the pontifical *Observer*, the *Sunday Dispatch*, the *Daily Mirror*, and *Daily Telegraph*—are on his trail. THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, whose Industrial Correspondent offers some fearsome suggestions regarding the regulation of wages in wartime, is rather unhappy about Mr. Bevin. And Mr. Emanuel Shinwell, spokesman for the Opposition in the House of Commons, also critical of Bevin, calls for a wide use of the Government's compulsory powers in respect to man-power.

Unless the trade union movement is careful, they are likely to be "kidded" into allowing Mr. Bevin to be cast out of the Ministry of Labour and National Service. Mr. Bevin's principle seems to be sound. Here is what he says in effect: "Here, we are fighting a war on behalf of democratic principles, plus other things, which can safely be left out of the argument at the moment. Our enemy is Fascism, and that means dictatorship. Do we fight like with like, or do we oppose opposite things?" Mr. Bevin supplies his own answer. He says, and keeps on saying it, in case short-sighted democrats lose sight of it, that he is prepared to lead, but not dictate. That he is prepared to follow a leader, if he so desires, as far as he wishes, but that he is not prepared to be driven. And in adopting that attitude, Ernest Bevin believes that he is at one with the trade unionist. He asserts that the answer to dictatorship is democracy, and that voluntaryism is superior to compulsion.

The real trouble with Bevin is that he says what he thinks to be true, and he has been hurting the friends of the employers by his shrewd observations. The former Minister of Labour, whose claim to be remembered was that he had a fog-horn voice, Mr. Ernest Brown, was almost mortally wounded when Mr. Bevin said that the Ministry was in a dreadful mess when he took over in May. Well, that was the fact. Lord Stamp went almost paralytic, when, after he, economist and railway executive, had stated that wages must not be allowed to follow prices upward (meaning, of course, that workers' standards must be depressed), Ernest Bevin suggested: "Before Lord Stamp starts trying to run the country, he should learn to run the railways." And the landed and business aristocracy, lunching at the Savoy three months ago, were not too pleased when Bevin reminded them that in all countries where a Fifth Column had been found, it had not had its support among the working class.

There is a tendency for all workers to forget what has been done. One of the things which must not be forgotten is that vested in the Minister of Labour at this moment are powers which if used could make any totalitarian system look like a congregation of anarchists. He has the power to order any individual to any job at any time, at the rate for the job. Mr. J. L. Garvin, for example, could be moved from the exhilarating pastime of running the war from a Fleet Street editorial chair, and given the job of rivet boy on Tyneside.

With any other Minister of Labour but Bevin, trade unionism in this country would likely play a losing game, no matter how vigilant they might be. The very devil could be played with trade union agreements, by the judicious transfer of workers from one industry to another or by the transfer of workers, indeed, from one district to another. Chaos could be introduced into shipyards and engineering establishments by the careless introduction of one worker, never mind a score. The planting of one trainee or dilutee on a job that is rightly classified as skilled work, but which could be performed in half-hearted fashion by a dilutee, would be sufficient to lose the production time necessary to produce a thousand aeroplane engines. It is more engines that are needed, not less. Ordered planning and smooth working will get them. Bevin's problem, and everybody else's for that matter, is to get some semblance of regulation and order in industries that have previously been hotbeds of competitive waste.

The only way to manage that is to rely on the voluntary effort of the worker. Take, for an example, the question of working after the siren. One or two establishments tried ordering their staffs and

machine-room workers to continue after the public siren had sounded. The result was stoppage after stoppage. Unofficial disputes, idle machines, were the result. But where consultation with the workers in the factories took place, schemes were worked out which beat the enemy plans. Production continued, by agreement.

One of the tragedies of modern industry which is being felt now, and which might well be felt to a greater extent in the future, is the general loss of skill which has been allowed to disappear, or fall into such disuse as to make it negligible. That has been one of the theories that has been put on solid ground by the interview panels which Bevin established to review the cases of people who had been unemployed for one month or more. Workers who had been trained as engineers, shipyard workers and shipwrights, skilled bricklayers, had left their various industries to go into more remunerative employment. One of the surprising features was the number of people engaged in retail distribution whose training had been as engineers. For anyone to go into retail distribution to "better themselves" is a sad reflection on the low wages and high unemployment which were a feature of the skilled engineering industry of recent years. The rationalisation process which has taken place since the last war has not only meant fewer shipyards from which are now required more "bottoms" than they can possibly lay, and closed cement works and derelict brick kilns sacrificed to monopolies, but also a shortage of men constantly in practice with the use of tools. One dare hardly prophesy, but one of the developments which this war may bring might be either that the people will say that the type of economy that can close down shipyards and brickworks in order to keep the price of bricks high and freightage dear shall be replaced by a system where it will be to the national advantage to have cheap freights and plenty of bricks, as well as the skilled worker to utilise his craft for the benefit of all: or there will be a reversion to the development of small trading by private enterprise, and a consequent increase in the number of people using the "tools of the trade."

The collapse of French resistance to the Nazis has been one of the main burdens of British industry: and it was the collapse of France that brought Bevin into the Government. We are only realising now the fullest measure of the fall of France, and it is being measured in terms of shipping tonnage sunk, and the Limitation of Supplies Order. On the other hand, it might well mean the re-birth of Britain's agriculture, and Bevin's foresight in getting the Minister of Agriculture and the farmers to accept as a minimum wage 48*s.* a week for farm workers was not only sound trade union practice, but good economy, too. The land will never be starved of efficient workers as long as the wage that can be got in the countryside will bear comparison with that of the city-dweller.

The non-manual worker, as well as the landworker, has reason to be glad of Bevin. Without a song and dance, the income limit for inclusion in the State's Unemployment Insurance Scheme is now £420 instead of £250 as formerly. While at the moment there may not be the benefit attached to that particular increase, there is little doubt, in many minds at any rate, that when the days of peace are next expected to pipe, this protection will be useful.

The long-term unemployed panels are doing a job of work that is both useful and humane. The experience of being a number at the Employment Exchange is not a good one. The clerk behind the counter regards a man as a classification, an entry on a card index. That is his job. He is no more interested in the man signing on than he is in breeding white mice or cultivating red cabbage. Many of the men who have come before the panels are men in their late fifties, and early sixties, some of them unemployed incessantly for six or seven years. Hope of a job had died. The panels have not only breathed new hope into them, but in thousands of cases have provided new jobs. Now there is the development of re-classification for possible lighter jobs than those they normally followed, while the Minister has announced the possibility of the institution of industrial pensions for those classed as no longer fit for work and whose only chance of anything like an independent income was the arrival of their old age pension at 65.

Maybe I am sentimental about the "veterans of industry." The spectacle of these men, so long discarded as worthless scrap, being given a chance to throw back their shoulders as once they did is as great to me as the increases in unemployment pay (at rates of equality as between men and women, an entirely new principle of insurance), the attempt to level up agricultural workers' unemployment benefit with that of the industrial worker, and the substitution of a two-day waiting period in place of three for unemployment benefit; all sound, solid achievements during the Bevin Ministry.

It is to be noted, too, that the Cost of Living Committee's report is foreshadowed before the end of this year, and despite the stress of war, an entirely new basis may be evolved to determine the rise or fall of the cost of living index: and since the present index is based on the method of living in 1914, it seems to be rather an achievement for Bevin to secure in a little over six months the result of an enquiry on evidence which has been pigeon-holed and incarcerated in dusty cupboards these last three years.

There is also a possibility of a new form of Fair Wages Clause, with the National Arbitration Order as a pattern, to replace the 31-year-old Clause at present doing duty. Whether Government contractors will have to give compulsory recognition to trade unions, as well as recognise fair standards, or "prevailing standards," is a matter which is probably being dealt with now by the T.U.C., along with the Minister.

Which brings us to the National Arbitration Order, instituted as a result of agreement between the employers and trade unions, inspired by Mr. Bevin. The Tribunal is receiving rather a mixed reception, and some of the smaller trade unions are responsible. There are cases going to compulsory arbitration that could never have been got to any sort of arbitration before the institution of the Order, and some of the claims are frivolous. Claims for recognition, for example, are not the type of case on which any Tribunal has half a chance of making an award. Recognition can only come, if it is to be worth while, as a result of organisation of the workers concerned. If the workers themselves have not sufficient faith in themselves to organise inside their trade union and compel recognition, it is difficult to see how they are worth recognising. It is fantastic in the extreme, for example, for a union with only 5 per cent. of the possible workers inside their organisation, to demand recognition by forcing an employer before a Tribunal. And even should the Tribunal make such an award, it would not be worth the paper on which it was printed.

The only case of any importance to reach the Tribunal is the claim of the engineering unions but it is fair to say that the existence of the Order has had the effect of increasing the bargaining field of the unions, and of opening many doors that have formerly been tightly shut. This strengthening of the hands of the unions can have only the effect of strengthening democracy, and increasing the wage standards and living standards of workers.

Thrown in as makeweight are the provision of factory canteens and industrial welfare services, improved factory lighting, the medical services in factories which may well blossom forth as a State Medical Service, feeding facilities for dockers, and the payment for work done on suspended statutory holidays at overtime rates. Important make-weights they are, too.

Mr. Bevin's work at the Ministry of Labour has been done, it would seem, with an eye on one ultimate thing—the development of democracy inside the still too feudal atmosphere of industry. The strengthening of democracy in this country and its extension into fields where previously it was difficult to get even a toe-hold, are real achievements in a period when even the accredited stalwarts of democracy and liberty appear to be hankering after limitations of freedom. Bevin has shown that he is aware of this trend of thought. He has done more. He has set out to combat it, and is succeeding. The critics have already lost the battle, and trade unionism is more strongly rooted as a result of his Ministry.

A. HARDY

A LONDON DIARY

MR. MORRISON has done well to choose Ald. Key, Member of Parliament for Bow and Bromley and Deputy-Controller for Poplar, to succeed Captain Wallace as Regional Commissioner for London. When some of us first reported the general failure of local authorities at the beginning of the London Blitz, we noticed the exceptional work of Ald. Key. As a member of the Labour Party A.R.P. Committee which used to fight Sir Samuel Hoare and Sir John Anderson, and as Chairman of the joint committee of Metropolitan Boroughs, Mr. Key really understands the problems of local government and the effect of air attacks on the poorer population in heavily bombed areas. Under his guidance Poplar has in many ways been an example to the other boroughs. Its plans for large-scale underground shelters were defeated, just as similar plans were in other areas, but the surface shelters were well built and the improvements that we have all been clamouring for since last September were already to a considerable extent accomplished facts in the Poplar shelters. The Anderson shelters have been strengthened and made as comfortable as possible; the brick surface shelters have been water-proofed, and important experiments in heating them have been made. According to the original

Home Office specifications the roofing of brick shelters was to end flush with the wall. Poplar, foreseeing that water would run down and soak through the walls, put an overhang roof, which carried the water clear. For some time the Home Office refused to sanction this departure from their own specifications. To-day Poplar has so proved its case that surface shelters are in future to be fitted with eaves. Experiments are now being made in Poplar whereby the rubble of demolished houses is used to build an "overcoat" round the existing surface shelters, with the result that the shelters are both less noisy and less wet. As a result of all this the surface shelters of Poplar are fully used, whereas in many other districts they are largely deserted. The new Commissioner is appointing an experienced woman with the full-time job of "housekeeping" for the shelters, and he takes with him 17 officials of the Ministry of Health, which is now solely responsible for conditions inside shelters. The location and direction of new shelters remains the task of the Minister of Home Security. Mr. Morrison promises further accommodation in City basements. Here the problem is rather to allocate places in the shelters and to persuade people in heavily bombed areas to sleep at nights farther away from their homes. This is sometimes difficult, for East End communities stick together and have built up an odd new kind of life in overcrowded shelters which is not so possible when bunks arrive. I believe that the neglect of deep shelters was a tragedy and I am sure that it is important that the work of tunnelling and providing for further deep shelter accommodation should be continued. Before this war is over we shall need all the deep shelter accommodation we can get. Meanwhile, I note the remarkable fact that only 5 per cent. of the population occupies large communal shelters, 19 per cent. sleep in various types of surface shelters, and that about three-quarters of London's population still remains in its bed at nights. The most dangerous time for epidemics is still ahead of us, and the Ministry of Health is well aware that disease now incubating may appear in epidemic form in the course of the next three months. But at present the health figures are good and the increase in epidemics is of insignificant proportions.

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For a theatre-lover there is one pleasure greater than going to a play yourself—going to one with Desmond MacCarthy. From the moment you enter the foyer with him the play has already begun; the ground is being prepared and watered by the spray of talk which the bills set playing—the actors' talents, earlier productions, similar themes. But once the lights go down, it is the play and nothing but the play. Perched forward on his stall, he waits for the first dramatic action—the raising of the curtain—with a more generous readiness to enjoy than any child at its first matinee. After that, the alertest concentration appraises every nuance of the lines, every gesture and intonation of the actors—how exactly you can judge if you are lucky enough to be taken round "behind" by him afterwards. There, in the star's dressing-room, scene after scene is re-enacted; declaiming from his capacious memory, he becomes hero, heroine, attendant in turns, questioning an interpretation, pointing out a faulty movement, re-emphasising a perfect one. Finally, going home in the taxi, the whole is weighed up and elaborated, a performance which will continue far into the early morning if your enthusiasm can keep as unflagging and wakeful as his. Readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION have enjoyed that enthusiasm vicariously for many years. Now in *Drama* (Putnam, 9*s.* 6*d.*), a collection of his notices over many years, they can revive it. And how well these notices read. On Shakespeare, Chehov, Ibsen, we know that he will extend our response and increase our enjoyment; what is equally remarkable is to excite our interest in a play which is itself forgotten. But to his bustling, discursive intelligence every curtain that rises starts a hare, and the chase is always the greatest fun and always conducted with style.

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One should chalk it up when restitution is made from wrong-doing. On August 31st I called attention in this column to a singularly mean attack on Mr. G. Strauss, M.P., in *Truth*. I see that *Truth* (whose editor has changed since my former paragraph) has now apologised and paid £250 to George Strauss who gives the money to the *Tribune*. The *Tribune*, with R. W. Postgate as editor, has become a very lively and useful paper. I am sorry to see that it has been forced to change its address, which is now 222 Strand, W.C. 2.

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The death of Baden-Powell is a reminder of the times when the arch-fiend was named Kruger and when we were persuaded that the Boers were a set of uncouth villains who fired on the Red Cross and never took a bath. General Smuts was one of the savages who were presumably civilised by our conquest. On the whole not one of the glorious episodes in our history, although the subsequent grant of self-government was a genuine example of British political wisdom. The relief of Mafeking gave a new word to the language and not a flattering one. The boy scout movement with which Baden-Powell's name will always be linked, belongs to a transition period. It was based on a real understanding of the psychology of boys and its spirit was never the cheapjack imperialism of the Boer War period. The mood of the people in this war shows an almost revolutionary advance on the ethics of Kilping.

* * *

I have in front of me the issue of *Life* for October 21st. A letter has also reached me expressing astonishment that this issue should contain a very unfavourable account of the shelter situation in East London sent apparently by the editor of this paper as "a correspondent" of *Life*. A word of explanation seems called for. No "letter" was in fact sent to *Life*; *Life* reprinted (with permission) an article that appeared in this paper a month earlier, when things were at their worst just before Mr. Morrison's appointment. Permission was given on condition that prominence was given to Mr. Morrison's appointment and a note added that speedy improvements might be expected. For the article to appear a month later (when Mr. Morrison and Miss Wilkinson had been at work for a month) as an original contribution to *Life* without any reference to the appearance of the article in the *N.S. & N.* was unexpected and unfortunate. I would add one further comment. In this case the lapse of a month between publication in England and the U.S.A. and the absence of explanation that the article was reprinted from an English paper may have given a wrong impression. But it is a complete mistake to think that any good is done by trying to doctor our picture for the U.S.A. American correspondents "put over" our successes or failures far more vividly that we can: help will not be retarded from the U.S.A. because we are frank. Americans are accustomed to much franker journalism than English people; they are always suspicious that we are hiding the truth or bamboozling them. Their response is the readier the more difficult our situation and the tougher our reaction to it.

* * *

A correspondent sends me the following account of one good deed:

On Sunday afternoon, December 8th, 1940, the first library built for natives in the Union of South Africa was opened in the Western Native Township of Johannesburg. The Friends of Africa had, since Winifred Holtby's death, wanted a living memorial to her work for Africans, but they had not sufficient money to make their dream materialise without other assistance. By co-operation with the City of Johannesburg it has been made possible for a special library building to be erected by the Non-European Department of the City, and for a free library for the natives of this township to be administered by the Library Department of the City. Miss Holtby's own books are to form a part of the collection.

The opening ceremony would have been especially interesting to one fresh from London. He would have noticed the segregation—slightly more cordial at its fringes and less marked than usual in South Africa, but still very noticeable to the born Londoner, together with such small things as the admonishing attitude of some of the Europeans, and the slight hesitation of most of them before shaking hands with a native. The speeches were slowed down by the fact that every phrase was immediately translated into Sesuto and Zulu, the two native interpreters tackling their work with endearing zest. The Mayor of Johannesburg, the Chairman of the Non-European Committee and the Chairman of the Library Committee spoke, but the chief speaker was Mrs. Margaret Ballinger, M.P., one of the representatives of the natives in the South African House of Assembly. She outlined Winifred Holtby's work and hopes for the Africans and the plans the Friends of Africa had made for a suitable memorial to her. No more fitting person than Mrs. Ballinger could have paid this tribute to Winifred Holtby. Mrs. Ballinger is, perhaps, the best woman speaker in the Union. Her work for the natives has been whole-hearted and guided by wisdom.

The native library is only but a small beginning. There is a library for non-Europeans in the Bantu Men's Social Centre near the centre of Johannesburg, and ten schools for non-European (Indian, Chinese, coloured) children have deposits of books, but for the most part the native population has no access to books. On the success of the Winifred Holtby experiment will depend the future plans for the provision of libraries in the other native townships.

* * *

I enjoyed the end of Mr. E. M. Forster's article in the current issue of *Civil Liberty*. Remarking on the B.B.C. rule—also the journalists' nightmare—that Goebbels will make use of any honest criticism we make of our own country, Mr. Forster says "Don't be all that afraid of Dr. Goebbels—let him quote like Hell; he will arrive there all the sooner if he does. Our job is to say what we think and what we feel."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to Audrey Kent.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The most pathetic thing about Adolf Hitler was his passionate desire to be approved of by English gentlemen.—*Daily Telegraph.*

Many rifles are lost on active service, of course, but they are replaced without charge to the soldier.—*Daily Mirror.*

The matter that appears to have worried him most in Gibraltar, however, was not so much the civil war between Franco and the Reds as the re-institution of the Royal Calpé Hunt, which was disintegrating owing to one of those squabbles over mastership that occur sometimes in less torrid zones. This he settled amicably, as he did most things during his life, and it was a pity his ability for peace-making was not employed more generally throughout the Spanish peninsula.—*Observer.*

The Coastal Command, a high R.A.F. official stated yesterday, was being strengthened.

He stressed the defeat of the Nazi day bomber, in the resilience of the R.A.F.; the gradual diminution of night bombing as defences improved, and the need for constant vigilance against invasion.

"The Germans before the war put no faith in the accuracy of bombing by night," he said. "They were encouraged by easy victories in Poland, where lack of defences enabled them to use day bombers as we would over tribesmen."—*Daily Telegraph.*

The incident reminds one of another when Charles Fry dined in Berlin with Hitler and Ribbentrop and suggested that Germany should play Test cricket as a means of a better understanding with Britain.—*News Chronicle.*

AMATEUR COMMUNIQUÉ

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

WHY do so many of us, on hearing or reading the words, "Air Ministry Communiqué," feel irritated, resigned, apathetic, bored, anything but expectant or alert? Our part of the war has been an air war so far. The main news has been air news, news of air battles, of raids over Germany, raids on us. Stirring news, surely. Why are we not stirred? Why are we not told what we may be told in simple, direct English, instead of in clumsy, hesitant departmentalese? Why are we treated as if straight speech would succeed where the German bombs have failed—in breaking our morale?

Now it is an odd state of affairs when one reflects that, at the beginning of the war, the Air Ministry was most careful to recruit journalists for its News Service. It gave them comparatively high ranks in order that they might have sufficient authority to collect and collate news of the air war. Among them were journalists of fifteen or twenty years' experience. One, at least, had the reputation of being the best reporter produced by Fleet Street since the last world war. In answer to a Parliamentary question over a year ago, it was stated that there were thirty-one of these R.A.F. Press Officers, that they supplied the Air Ministry with, among other things, news, and that their cost to the nation was £20,000 a year.

In return for our money we have had, it is true, a great many instalments of what Mr. Priestley called "the Spitfire-Messersehmitt series." The words of innumerable pilots who have dropped bombs on Berlin have been quoted at us. But the work of these Air Force reporters seldom has the freshness, the exciting quality, of news. It is deadened by the fact that the essential news which it contains has already been announced in the turgid language of an official communiqué.

And who is responsible for the official communiqué? That is a question which the Air Ministry at one time tried hard not to answer. A question in the House of Commons some months ago asked for information about the staffing and functions of an Air Ministry section known as A.I.6. The answer was that to give details of the work of a branch of Intelligence would not be in the public interest. But this hopeful little evasion did not serve. It very soon became known that A.I.6 stood for the sixth section of Air Intelligence, that its functions were the preparation of official communiqués and the censorship of press, film and broadcasting material dealing with the R.A.F. It also became known that the head of A.I.6 was a K.C. with the rank of Wing Commander, that his officer staff consisted mainly of lawyers closely associated with each other in civil life, and a couple of members of the theatrical profession.

While it was true that the journalists who had been invited by the Air Ministry to join were not flying men, they were at least specially trained for the work which they were called upon to do. The staff of A.I.6 were strangers both to the Air Force and to journalism, with the exception of one officer who had a little flying, but no newspaper, experience. It seemed also that there were two sets of censors, one at the Air Ministry and one at the Ministry of Information. The newspapers protested against the delays caused by this double censorship, and A.I.6 had part of their censorship duties at the Air Ministry taken away from them.

There remained the drafting of official communiqués, or, to put it plainly, the selection and issue of news of air raids and air battles. For some reason or other, A.I.6 appear to have been given control over the issue of news from the Air Ministry. For many months it has been obvious that the official communiqué gives the first news of any air action. The authors of the official communiqué, in other words, control not only the time at which the news may be issued, but also the manner in which the public are to receive their first impressions. The way in which the first news of an air battle or bombing raid on this country is given is often very important. If it is amateurishly handled by men with little knowledge of news presentation, much harm may be done. The many delays in issuing official communiqués dealing with the great air battles of August and September, and their poverty of language, lessened the propaganda effect of these victories, especially in the United States. The dreary repetition of stock phrases in the communiqués dealing with the present night raids proves irritating to the bombed and suspicious to the neutral.

Is there not, it may be asked, someone in authority at the Air Ministry whose duty it is to interpret a higher propaganda policy? There has recently come into being a Directorate of Public Relations, expensively reorganised out of a more honestly named Press and Publicity Branch. Government departments and other official bodies have a weakness for the high sounding but vague term, Public Relations. Unlike the words "press" and "publicity," it does not imply any particular knowledge or training. The Director of Public Relations at the Air Ministry is an Auxiliary Air Commodore who was at Eton, but who has had little experience of war, journalism, or publicity.

Air Ministry amateurism has had one serious result. Some time ago the belief was encouraged that a method of beating the night bomber would be found in a few weeks. It has now been admitted that this was quite a mistaken impression. Why was such unskilful propaganda spread? Simply because amateur propagandists always imagine that people need regular small doses of optimism, something to "keep their courage up," to "strengthen their morale." This false notion of the national "morale" is responsible, quite as much as a desire to hinder the enemy, for the irritating vagueness of the Air Ministry's amateur communiqué. A regular R.A.F. officer of some distinction in the last war as well as in this, said not long ago, "when people are being bombed, tell them, so far as you can, how badly they are being bombed. It will make them all the prouder that they are standing up to it."

MORE OR LESS

PEOPLE who are making more
Money in the People's War
Cannot stomach the distress
Of people who are making less.

MICHAEL BARSLEY

SPLIT INFINITIVE

I SPLIT an infinitive the other day. Or, to more accurately state the matter, I did not split it, but it got split somehow or somewhere—probably through a misreading of my difficult manuscript—between the writing of an article and its publication. If I had seen a proof the disaster would never have been allowed to occur; but I did not see a proof and learned what had happened only from a friendly but horrified reader. A day later, much to my astonishment, I received a letter of congratulation. "May I be the first to congratulate you," wrote my correspondent, "on your conversion to the split infinitive, that admirable, logical, convenient construction. (Ought I to say 'reconversion,' for surely everyone uses it without thinking till the amateur grammarian—schoolmaster or other—interferes.)"

Now, to truly speak, I thought at first that my correspondent was writing in irony; but, when I reread his letter, I saw that he was quite genuinely clapping me on the back for having committed a sin. For a sin I was brought up to believe it, and I have never seen any reason for thinking that on this matter my elders were mistaken.

The tradition of the English language is opposed to the split infinitive, and I believe that most traditions have their roots in instinctive racial wisdom and should be respected until they are shown to be doing positive evil. Consider how much of our pleasure as we eat at table is due to our obedience to tradition. Only an anarchist without a palate would set his guests down to a dish of roast duck and horse-radish sauce or would serve apple sauce with roast beef. It is possible that mint sauce would go well with salmon and that cucumber and vinegar would be an ideal relish for roast lamb. But who would take the risk of such unnatural conjunctions?

It is true that traditional customs of eating and drinking change from century to century, but they change gradually, if we are wise, like freedom broadening slowly down from precedent to precedent. Schoolboys once drank beer at breakfast where we now drink tea or coffee. Sir Walter Raleigh never knew what it was to sit down to a plate of boiled beef and carrots. Sardines and tunny-fish from a tin were, I imagine, unknown as the beginning of a meal in the days of Dr. Johnson. Progress has undoubtedly been made, but it has been made, it should be noted, chiefly in the direction of establishing new traditions. It needed a war to temporarily upset the great English traditions of the Sunday joint and the Christmas dinner. One of the first results of the settlement of this volcanic world into peace and prosperity will be, I am willing to prophesy, the restoration of these traditions. And how happy the survivors of the eruption will be!

If tradition counts for so much in a minor matter such as the preparation of food, how much more worthy of respect we should consider it in the use of that mystical means of human communication—language! Every language must have begun with a series of inarticulate sounds, but generation after generation of men made more and more sounds and associated this or that collocation of them with a definite traditional meaning. Some man in authority said "elephant" one day, and thenceforth from sire to son everyone agreed that this particular sound or noise meant the animal we still call an elephant. The pure rationalist might argue that it might as reasonably have been called a capercailzie, and I do not know what the answer to this is unless it is that it is traditionally called an elephant and that tradition is frequently right.

Then, having invented a number of words, the race of mankind had to create a tradition governing the order in which words might be used and another tradition governing the influence which various words had on each other. The Romans, with their extraordinary "by, with, or from a table" kind of grammar, were able to scatter their words with apparent recklessness through a sentence. It must have required enormous faith on the part of the Romans to believe that words used in such a fashion would form themselves into sentences that would ultimately make sense; but few people will deny that the Roman faith was justified. The English, a more rational race, felt that it was absurd not to care in what part of the sentence the verb, the subject, the object, adjectives and adverbs came, and out of this feeling was born a straightforward language in which it mattered a good deal whether you said "Caesar killed Brutus" or "Brutus killed Caesar." The Irish, for their part, a people in love with action, looked on the verb as the vital word in a sentence and invented a tradition according to which every—or nearly every—sentence begins with a verb. Thus the Irish do not say: "I struck him" but "Struck I him." It is because of this passion for the verb that the Irish have no words for "yes" and "no." In Irish if a man is asked: "Did you it?" his affirmative reply is never "Yes," but always "Did." Even in speaking English the Irishman usually replies not "Yes," but "I am" or "I did" or "It is."

All these things are matters of tradition, and reason has played its part chiefly in acknowledging the importance of tradition and in making rules by the observance of which the greatest clarity and significance can be attained. In learning a language we all accept the tradition and do our best to follow it. If the Romans chose to have a fancy for the ablative absolute the wise English schoolboy does not question their right to speak their own language as whimsically as they liked: he sets out slavishly to imitate them and even to go one better. It is the same with all their supines, their gerunds and gerundives, and their *non est dubium quin's*. He feels that what was good enough for the Romans is good enough for him—especially for examination purposes.

The English language, unfortunately, has in modern times become the prey of innovators—wolves in sheep's clothing who, under the pretext that language is a living and therefore a growing thing, invade the fold of traditional English speech and—with the best will in the world, of course—attempt to spread destruction. Some of them, for example, defend the phrase "It's me" as good English grammar, arguing that it is the equivalent of the French "C'est moi." But English is not French, and "It's me," though good colloquial English, is not good English. Let anyone consider how he would feel if, in reading the *New Testament*, he found the phrase, "It's me; be not afraid," or "It's me; don't be afraid." What a loss the sentence suffers not only in dignity, but in meaning to the imagination, in its colloquial form! Again, take Hamlet's great cry as he leaps into Ophelia's grave: "This is I, Hamlet the Dane." Alter this to "This is me, Hamlet the Dane," and you will have brought down the scene with a bang from literature to the market-place.

There are other innovators who defend such recent importations as "face up to" and "check up on." I cannot myself see any difference in meaning between "Check that" and "Check up on that." If the latter is right, then why not "I met up on him" or "I ate up on a good dinner"?

To those who argue in favour of useless innovations that language must be allowed to grow, I answer that a rosebush must be allowed to grow but that it grows all the better for regular pruning. And never was the English language in greater need of the pruning scissors than in the twentieth century, with new words invented every day and new phrases imported from across the oceans. Mr. A. P. Herbert has done much gallant work as a pruner; but what is one against so many? He would need to have all the clergy, all the Bar, all the professors and all the schoolmasters to assist him if the rosebush is to be made to bloom again as it once did.

Not that I believe that good literature was ever produced merely as a result of obeying traditional rules. A man might break many of the rules and yet be a good writer: he might obey them all and be a mediocre writer. Grammarians can produce examples of incorrect English from the work of almost all the best writers. I once heard a man maintain that there was not a single English writer who had never used a split infinitive. I did not agree with him. At the same time, there is no doubt that some of the best writers of modern times have indulged in it. You will find split infinitives, I think, in John Ruskin. Mr. Hilaire Belloc, who has written some of the finest prose of our age, has, if I remember right, defended the split infinitive and used it defiantly. Oddly enough—(a phrase, by the way, that I was once taught not to use)—I do not object to these spots in the sun. I do not feel the less admiration for Rudyard Kipling's prose because he wrote "blame it on" and "knots per hour."

The truth is, I do not worry even about the split infinitive nearly as much as I may have seemed to do. I do not like to use it myself, and to do so seems to me as unnatural as cutting an oyster in two with a steel knife. In all such matters that do not much matter, I am in sympathy with tradition. Hence I reject the congratulations so prematurely offered to me. At the same time, in order to appease my correspondent who, it is clear, meant kindly, I have this week introduced one or two examples of the obnoxious usage. I hope they will be regarded as a slight token of my sense of his good nature.

Y. Y.

HENRI BERGSON

BERGSON'S death last Sunday at the age of 82 carries the mind back over a gulf, a gulf that separates us from a vanished age, the last age of our civilisation. Bergson's "floruit" was in the years immediately preceding 1914, halcyon years in which philosophy was "all the go." At least, it was "all the go" in Paris, where fashionable Parisiennes flocked to crowded lectures to listen to Bergson's assurances that scientific truth was not all, was not even strictly true, since the world it affirmed and explored was not strictly real; that the real universe was creative; that man, therefore, was free; that the intellect taken as a guide to truth was misleading; that we nevertheless possess such a guide in intuition, a faculty which we apparently share with the ants and the bees.

What were the considerations upon which these rather surprising conclusions were based? There was, first, a critical examination of mechanist theories of evolution. The factors which were commonly thought to determine the course of evolution, natural selection, adaptation to environment and so on, fail, according to Bergson, to account for the occurrence of the variations upon which they operated. They also fail to account for the abrupt transformation of species by mutation. Such occurrences, Bergson thought, require us to postulate a creative vital force which subsequently came to be known as the *élan vital*, which worked in and through the matter of which living bodies are composed, moulding it much as the fingers of a sculptor mould the clay of his model.

Similarly with the mind-body problem. Mind is not a mere

by-product of matter, nor can we write off mental events as the reflections of prior events which occur in the brain. The mind, in fact, overflows the brain. Here is a simile of Bergson's, one of his most striking, which illustrates the meaning of "overflows." An actor in a play not only speaks but gesticulates. Hence a deaf man would be able to discover what the play was about from seeing the gestures of the actor. But there is obviously more in a play than the pantomime of the players. There are the words, the characters, the poetry and the drama. Now the brain, according to Bergson, is the organ of pantomime. To observe a man's brain is to discover just as much of his thoughts as find vent in gestures. But the thoughts themselves are more than the gestures and some thoughts are never expressed in action at all. Hence to know only the brain is to miss as much of the man taken as a whole as the deaf spectator misses of the play. So conceived, the mind is an expression of that *élan vital* which we have already seen to be the inspiring principle of evolution.

The next step is the identification of the *élan vital* with the universe itself. This step, which was taken in the most famous of Bergson's books, *Creative Evolution*, consisted in a rigorous elucidation of the implications of Heracleitus' celebrated aphorism *πάντα ῥεῖ*. Everything is in a state of flux. The fact, when we come to reflect upon it, is obvious. What is not quite so obvious is that if it is true there are no *things*, for a thing represents a congealment of the flux. Now the congealment, even if temporary, must be something other than the purely fluid process of change which is supposed to congeal. Yet this something other is precisely what, according to Bergson, cannot be found.

"Take," he says, "the most stable of internal states, the visual perception of a motionless object. The object may remain the same, I may look at it from the same side, at the same angle, in the same light; nevertheless, the vision I now have of it differs from that which I have just had, even if only because the one is an instant later than the other. My memory is there, which conveys something of the past into the present. My mental state, as it advances on the road of time, is continually swelling with the duration which it accumulates." Bergson's conclusion is that "we change without ceasing and the state itself is nothing but change." There is thus no self which changes, for in asserting the existence of that which changes we are asserting the existence of something which, from the mere fact that it is subject to change, is not itself change.

Similarly with external things. Everybody, every quality of a body resolves itself into an enormous number of vibrations, movements, changes. What is it that vibrates, moves, is changed? There is no answer. Philosophy has long dismissed the notion of substance, and modern physics has endorsed the dismissal. Just as in the self, so also in the world outside the self, there is nothing that changes; there is only change.

How then, does the world come to appear to us as a collection of solid static objects extended in space. Because of the intellect which presents us with a false view of it. The intellect is the tool which evolution has forged for the purposes of action. Action in a world of continual flux would be difficult, if not impossible. Therefore the intellect makes cuts across the change, introducing stops or gaps into the living flow of reality. The effect of these cuts, the result of the stops, is the congelation of the flow into apparently solid objects. Such a world serves us well enough for the purposes of action, but it serves us ill if it is taken as an index of reality, for the intellect being practical, cannot serve as a guide to cosmic truth. This office is reserved for a faculty which Bergson called intuition, whose nature and workings he deduced from a theory of real time, "duration," on the model of which he conceived it.

All this and much more is conveyed by Bergson with incomparable elegance and lucidity. In his hands philosophy was indeed charming. He was a master of the art of conveying difficult ideas in simple language and employed an unequalled talent for metaphor and simile to illustrate the dark places of his argument. Bergson's philosophy broke like a breath of fresh air into a closed world, a world whose science was dominated by an iron determinism and over whose philosophy there brooded the Hegelian Absolute, of which William James had said that it was like a "large seaside boarding house with no private bedroom in which I might take refuge from the society of the place." Into this world Bergson came with the effect of a man who opens up a house that has too long been closed. The curtains are drawn, the shutters taken down, the windows opened and in streams the sunlight in the shape of the *élan vital*. His influence upon popular thought was great, greater perhaps than that of any subsequent philosopher. His philosophy was credited for example with being one of the sources of the contemporary movement of Syndicalism. It is certainly true that Bergson was a friend of Georges Sorel and it may well have been that the irrationalism which characterised Bergson's thoughts played some part in fostering the syndicalist myth of the General Strike. More probably both are to be regarded as expressions of tendencies that were stirring in the matrix of the times. In so far as it sanctioned these tendencies, Bergson's influence was unfortunate. It has been charged, for example, against his philosophy that it gave countenance to the habit of thinking with one's blood instead of one's brain, which has since become so disastrously familiar. On the credit side his philosophy paved the way for that criticism of scientific method which was later to expose its limitations, if taken as a key to the interpretation of the universe. In 1935 Bergson published his last book *The Two Sources of Religion and Morality*. It developed the conclusions of his earlier philosophy into a general view of the universe covering the whole duty of man. *The Two Sources* is a noble work, but it lacks the fire and originality of the pre-1914 works. Bergson in 1935 was an old man who felt that he had outlived his generation. Through his philosophy breathed a spirit of optimism and hope which belongs to a vanished age; the world is being made perpetually afresh and man is a supreme instrument of its making. I doubt whether many of us believe that to-day. C. E. M. JOAD

CONVERSATION

ORDINARY people are peculiar too:
Watch the vagrant in their eyes
Who sneaks away while they are talking with you
Into some black wood behind the skull,
Following un-, or other, realities,
Fishing for shadows in a pool.

But sometimes the vagrant comes the other way
Out of their eyes and into yours
Having mistaken you perhaps for yesterday
Or for to-morrow night, a wood in which
He may pick up among the pine-needles and burrs
The lost purse, the dropped stitch.

Vagrancy, however, is forbidden; ordinary men
Soon come back to normal, look you straight
In the eyes as if to say "It will not happen again,"
Put up a barrage of common sense to baulk
Intimacy but by mistake interpolate
Swear-words like roses in their talk.

LOUIS MACNEICE

THE INVADER

EVERYTHING has to interest soldiers. Up on the downs in the soundless August evenings they used to light their fire under the trees a mile from us, and when their guards had been fixed they came down in twos and threes to our post to look at our hut. It was a plain thresher's hut on high iron wheels, with steps up to the door and a tin chimney standing out of the roof. "Beautiful evening," the soldiers said, in voices which were strange to this part of the country; and then stood staring at Sidney Taylor, Woolmer, Jim and me.

"That belongs to you?" they asked, nodding to the hut.

"Ah," said Sidney, who was our leader. He never said "Yes."

He was a small man of thirty-five with rings under his eyes, who lived half his life in his childhood still.

"It's got a stove," the soldiers said.

"Ah," said Sidney, growing larger. "And bunks. Four people can sleep in there."

"Go on," said the soldiers, staring at the hut.

"Ah," said Sidney, very proudly, "you could live in it."

The soldiers looked with wonder.

"No," said Sidney, showing off like a boy and defying anyone to deny what he was going to say. "Same as I was saying to Woolmer here, no one'd think to look at it, I lived for five weeks in that hut when I had chickenpox. When I was eleven."

"In there?" Everything interested the soldiers.

"Ah," almost shouted Sidney. "Didn't I, Woolmer?"

We were all ready to fight for something and at this height with so much country before us, it seemed to be a lot. But Sidney Taylor would be fighting for the hut and those five weeks, twenty-four years back, when he had had chickenpox in it.

One evening, soon after we had got to the post, we were surprised by the sound of loud singing on the road up from the valley. A man was coming up. He was walking in the middle of the road with two boys dancing round him, shouting and pulling his jacket. Sometimes he put a quart bottle to his lips as he walked and they clung round him jeering, "Give us a drop. Don't finish it." Then he put the bottle back in his pocket and stopped to sing. His black hair was plastered by sweat over his forehead, his shirt was torn open to the waist so that his thin and hairy chest stuck out like a case. One side of his gipsy face was drawn in like a big shrivelled chestnut leaf by a scar from jaw to temple. He was flashing with drink.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he said. We gathered round him.

"Sing. Go on, sing!" shouted the boys. "Look, he's going to sing again." The man's face buckled.

"Hah," screamed the boys. "He's soused. We found him in the ditch."

"Where you going, pal?" asked one of the soldiers.

"Whe-ah?" said the tramp. He had the high-class accent of the cheapjack. "I left me cah behind me so I'm walking. A bottle of cidah and me petah in me pocket and a clean shirt, that's all I want. I left Marlborough, boys, this morning and I'm heading for Winchester."

"You can't get there to-night," said Jim.

"Where are you going to sleep?" asked the soldiers.

"Ah," said Sid, coming closer. He had seen it: the tramp had an eye on his hut.

"On the road, pal. Anywhere."

"Ah," said Sid Taylor, non-committally.

"None of you gentlemen mind if I slept here?" said the tramp. Sid Taylor's eyes went shrewd.

"Sleep where you like, pal," said a soldier. "It's a free country."

"That's the Army," cried the tramp. "I'm an old soldier, pal. I'm drunk but I know a soldier. Kip down anywhere. That's the style. Heah! Salute! Eh? Smarter theah. That's it. Form fours. Right turn. Eh? Oh, I haven't forgotten it!" He saluted and danced through the movements.

A tall, very young soldier came forward and said in a soft, simple voice:

"What was you in, dad?"

"The Buffs, pal. The Royal West Kents. Steady the Buffs, eh?"

"That's it," said the gentle soldier.

"Mons, retreat from Mons, first battle of Ypres, second battle of Ypres. . . ."

The grins of the soldiers went. The tall, gentle one came forward.

"Then you must be an Old Contemptible, dad," said the tall soldier reverently.

"An Old Contemptible," said the tramp. "Boys, that's what I am. First I was a soldier and now I'm a boozer. But I'm not a liar. You think I'm a liar but I'm not. Here look at that." He pushed forward the lapel of his jacket.

"The crossed swords!" exclaimed the tall soldier.

"The crossed swords!" said the tramp. "That's a badge you can't buy. Here." He pulled dirty papers from his pocket. "Come on," he called hoarsely. "I've got me papahs."

We drew back.

"Oh!" whispered Woolmer. "Fancy that, he's got his papers."

"Too true he has," said Jim.

"That's all right, dad," "we believe you," said the soldier, putting his hand on the tramp's shoulder.

"You're telling the truth, dad," he said. "You're an Old Contemptible, that's what it says. And now, tell us, dad," he said, silencing the others, "what you got out of it." He spoke like a saint.

"What did I get!" said the tramp. "I'll show you." He pulled back his shirt and shoved his chest out. There was a five-inch scar on his chest. There was the long scar from the temple to the jaw.

Sid Taylor's eyes watered. He had not been in the last war. Woolmer nodded. But the soldiers were not interested. The scars were the only things about the tramp which did not interest them.

"And what did they give you for that, dad?" the tall soldier asked.

"Give me?" asked the tramp.

"Yes," said the soldier, raising his voice a note to the exalted tone of a preacher, standing above the corn and the grass with his mild head against the sky and his blue eyes bluer than the sky was now.

"I'll show you what they give me. Heah, is me bottle all right? What did they give me, you said? Heah."

He pulled a stamped unemployment card from his pocket.

"The dole," exclaimed all the soldiers.

"Ah!" exclaimed Sid Taylor.

"Stamped up to date," cried the tramp. "See." He put the bottle to his lips again. Then he jumped to attention and saluted.

"Smarter there," he cried. He saluted again. "Over the top they go. The Guards, the Coldstreams second to none, the Black Watch, the Camerons, the Gordons, all the Scotch regiments; the Royal West Kents, the Buffs, the Queens, The King's Own." His voice began to chant like an auctioneer's. ". . . the Lancashire Fusiliers, The Ox and the Berks, the Bucks, the Devons and the Royal Fusiliers. . . ."

"Fred Karnos," said a soldier.

"The First and Second Surreys, the Hampshires, the mud and glory boys and all the regiments of the line. . . ."

"Cor," said Jim. "Anyone give me a tanner? Going, going, gone!"

"The flower of England," called the tramp.

"And don't," said a soldier, "forget the weeds."

"And now look at me. I'm drunk. I'm a boozer. But I can work. Don't you believe a man who tells you boozers don't work—feel this."

He bent his arm and two or three of us tried his muscle. "A boozer works harder than other men and I'll tell you why. He wants his pay to get more booze. I was working yesterday and that's God's truth, but they made me go up a ladder and that's a thing a boozer can't stand. He gets giddy. I can nevah go up a height! So I packed it up, I got me petah and me cidah and I'm all right," his voice dropped to a whine, "if I can find a nice place to sleep out of the wind. Down by them bags now," he said suddenly, pointing to the sandbags. "That'd do. You gentlemen wouldn't mind me sleeping there."

"You'll be cold there, dad," said the soldier.

"Ah!" exclaimed Sid anxiously. "They got a fire up at their place."

"No, I'll be all right. I'll stay along of these gentlemen." He looked around and, nodding to the hut, said:

"Is that yours?"

"Ah," said Sid Taylor, daring him.

"Well I'll be near you. I like to be near someone at night. I won't make a sound."

"You come along of us, dad," said the soldier.

"Ah!" said Sid.

"Would that be far?" said the tramp cautiously.

"They'll take you," said Woolmer.

"It isn't far," said Sid eagerly.

"With these soldiers?" said the tramp suddenly reluctant.

"Here," muttered Sid in panic to Woolmer and me. "You take the guard. Stop anyone who comes. I'll take him along. He's got his eye on the hut."

"Just wait till we're off and the next thing he'd be up the steps and Bob's your uncle," said Jim.

"Ah!" said Sid. It was the most decisive, expressive and voluminous of all his "ahs."

The boys, scared of the growing dusk, ran off. The soldiers stood by indifferent.

"Coming, dad?" they said with detachment. A soldier, after all, has nothing.

"I'll bring him along," said Sid. Then the soldiers went off like sheep, and Sid and the tramp followed them like man and dog.

The day had gone, the moon was hanging like an orange in the haze and sending out the first fine shadows. Woolmer and I stood by the road. "Stand back under the trees," he said. "That's what we always had to do in France. When you reckon it out," he said, "It's history we're fighting for; other people don't seem to have any history, not in the same way. They don't keep it up."

"As you might say," said Woolmer shyly. "The Germans don't seem to have any history."

We talked a long time until the moon was white.

Then Sid and Jim came back. We could hear their boots on the road a long time before they came into sight.

"No," said Sidney Taylor. "They got a fire and they've given him some bags to sleep on."

"An' he ain't half telling them the tale," Jim said.

"Same as I was saying to Jim up the road just now, you could see what he was after—getting into the hut!" said Sidney.

"In one of those bunks," said Woolmer.

"Ah!" said Sidney. "A roadster!"

We had driven our first invader off.

V. S. PRITCHETT

THE MOVIES

"They Knew What They Wanted," at the Plaza
"Gold Rush Maisie," at the Empire

It had looked for a time as though the screen Laughton was going the way of Jannings. A voice capable of stunning audiences, a presence seeming to demand the inevitable bad end, and features that could be magnified with nightmare effect; these seemed marked down for grim melodrama or for comedy in which the mammoth "to make them mirth used all his might." Here and there—in *Ruggles of Red Gap*, for example—Laughton did manage to escape the *genre* created by his arrival in films; otherwise it was Harry of England, on the one hand, or Rembrandt with brush and bible, and Blythes and beachcombers on the other. Between great men and filibusters his talent seemed in danger, not so much of slipping, but of lurching, of bombinating into a histrionic style that could be called, without disrespect, "corking." Now, Laughton is, I think, a great actor, one of the few representatives of that dying species, and among great actors he is rare in possessing intelligence. Whether that intelligence has made or spoilt his films, I shan't decide; it has given him his own way, and rather too much of it. Hollywood has its deltas waiting to be flooded by genius; and one envisaged a time when Laughton would be painting his own scenery and composing his own incidental music. *They Knew What They Wanted* represents a break in egotism; we are impressed not only by a Laughton who has documented his part like Flaubert sitting down to *Madame Bovary*, but by a landscape and story and beyond that a world not blotted out by the Laughton *engueulade*. This, as a result, is the first film in which he gives a performance comparable with his acting on the stage, and some credit must go to the director, Garson Kanin. The opening shots give you the feel of living on a Californian fruit-ranch, of enjoying the sap and a view of your own, and with Laughton delightedly screwing up his eyes as he afterwards screws them up in a sunshine of happiness, we never lose contact with the furrows in which his life is planted. His fat, shy, brimming, boisterous, easy-natured Italian, with the gestures and hushes of childhood, is a splendid creation. The rudimentary wop-speech, which might so easily have degenerated into a trick, drops naturally from this giant toddler, as once before, in the part of the gangster Pirelli, Laughton added a last stroking touch to the soft-handed killer with his phonetics. This new Toni is as brilliantly conceived as the old, with all that genius of the body that only Laughton can put into a part. It is a delight to watch him swaggering on his horse; trying to dictate a love-letter and then giving it over, with a groan of relief and confidence, to his friend to write; squirming in the photographer's chair; trying to make out why everyone else is not fat and trusting and inarticulate like himself. He finds a wife, by correspondence, in a peaked city waitress (Carole Lombard), and dispatches his friend (William Gargan) to meet her at the station; this meeting proves disastrous; and the best scene in the film is the betrothal evening, when all the neighbours come to drink and show off, and Toni shows off most of all by climbing on to the roof and trying to walk along the ridge. The friend and the future wife stand together in the shadow watching; the drunk Toni ("See what Toni do, aha!") falls and breaks both legs. From that point, the film gets into its stride as drama—Toni laid up, the girl coming to love him, but already with child, the lover trying vainly to grapple her affection to himself—and it ends with Toni getting well, making the inevitable discovery and seeing his happiness fall to bits. There is no moment, even to the last (when the girl insists on going away—alone) which could be called either ineffective or false. On the contrary, our suspense is made to grow. And yet, resounding though the situation is, I felt in it a slight emptiness which was not present in the earlier scenes. A trace still of the gamut of collapse that the big-framed must achieve? Perhaps. But *They Knew What They Wanted* is good Laughton and a good film, too.

Gold Rush Maisie is an incongruous mixture of starving on the gold rush and being a cabaret-singer with lowcut dresses and a style hinting at Mae West futures. The last ingredient is supplied by Ann Sothern, and the first by Grapes (rather sweet, this time) of Wrath. Ann Sothern has a good line in looks and disdainful cracks, and Slim Somerville makes an easy butt. Lee Bowman is tougher and (sexually considered) in the running, so he has to bear the brunt of the hardest cracks and of a golden heart flaunted on the sleeve. Before she can compete in the West country, Miss Sothern will have to learn a little more finesse than this wearing of hearts.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Diversion No. 2," at Wyndhams

The second edition of *Diversion* is a great improvement on its predecessor. The first part, particularly, which is all but entirely new material, is well designed and holds together. Pungency and sentiment, music and monologue are nicely blended, the former in each case predominating, as in intimate revue it should. Miss Edith Evans is given much more suitable material—her reverie as she dresses for a dinner engagement is delightfully done; Mr. Bernard Miles is a happy innovation, his sketch of a yokel brilliantly touched off; Mr. Walter Crisham (except for his one inevitable lapse into the picturesque) and Miss Dorothy Dickson sing and dance even more engagingly than before. The finale in which a Broadcasting Gang are disposed of with a brilliant malice is an exemplar of what a revue sketch should be. It is a pity the second half tails off into the fault of the first edition—a series of isolated turns. Some very good turns, incidentally. Joyce Grenfell's Lady Librarian is a beauty. Peter Utsinov's impressions of Shakespearean producers are wickedly good. But clearly some rearrangement is necessary to give them a pattern; that would bring the second half up to the level of the first and up to the level of the charming ensembles with which it begins and ends.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, January 11th—
- London Scots Self-Government Committee Lunch. Speakers: J. J. Davidson and David Robertson on "Scottish War Food Production," Wallis's Restaurant, Holborn Circus, 1. Tickets 3s.
- Royal Philharmonic Society Concert, Queen's Hall, 2.30.
- Desmond Hawkins: "Modern Poetry," Dick Sheppard Centre, 52 Queensway, 2.30.
- Service for Refugees and their English friends, Holy Trinity Church, Kingsway, 2.30.

SUNDAY, January 12th—
- Ernest Thurtle: "Toleration and Its Limitations," Conway Hall, 11.
- K. B. Smellie: "Social Philosophy," I.S.T.D., 17 Manchester Street, 11. Tickets 2s., or £2 for course.

MONDAY, January 13th—
- Eric Gill Memorial Exhibition, Victoria and Albert Museum, Room 74.
- Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch. Dr. Paolo Treves: "Whither Italy?" 12 Great Newport Street, 1.

TUESDAY, January 14th—
- Tom Harrisson: "Mass-Observation," Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1, 1.

WEDNESDAY, January 15th—
- Fabian Society Joint Lunch with Labour Book Service, Royal Hotel, Woburn Place, 1. Tickets 2s. 9d. from 11 Dartmouth Street, S.W.1.

THURSDAY, January 16th—
- Jewish Socialist Labour Party Luncheon Meeting, Trade Union Club, 12 Great Newport Street, 1.
- Miss Margaret Whinney: "Inigo Jones, a Classical Legend," Courtauld Institute of Art, 1.15.
- Piano and Song Recital by Angus Morrison and Betty Bannerman, Art Gallery, Brighton, 3.

Correspondence

THE G.P. IN WAR AND AFTER

SIR,—There are two methods of attacking existing social institutions; the first consists of attacking their basic structure and philosophy; the second and feebler approach is to assail their personnel.

Mr. Ritchie Calder uses both methods in his article where one senses a continuous stream of criticism directed against the general practitioner, culminating in his picture of London Panel Doctors sitting in their surgeries, twiddling their thumbs and drawing fat panel fees for nothing. Nothing could be further from the truth. Over three-quarters of London's population stays at home during the Blitz: are we to assume that doctors are never called out at night to visit this large section of the people? From my own experience and that of many of my colleagues I can say definitely that night calls are still as frequent, if not more frequent than in the pre-war era, and many of us are out every night often in the middle of heavy bombardments. Though our practices have shrunk, our work has increased.

It can be assumed that Mr. Calder has little knowledge of the life of the G.P.; even the two doctors he quotes have never been engaged in any form of active general medical practice.

The readiness with which lay people attack doctors as a whole, with the exception of their own favourite practitioner, is phenomenal. I have noticed this particularly at meetings on Socialist Medicine. At several of such meetings where I have spoken, I have been bombarded with abuse aimed at the G.P.; he works too hard, he works too little, he draws excessive fees and so on. The specialist never get a fraction of this abuse; though the system under which they work contains even greater faults than that of the G.P. Despite their superficial socialism, many critics have still a snobbish veneration for Harley Street and its environment. In their minds are the same seeds that make many Labour leaders flourish only when they come in contact with the upper classes.

As one who has sat on both sides of the fence, I can say that the average G.P. works hard and gives of his best; his work is far more arduous than that of most specialists and he comes more in contact with the people in their daily lives. He sees their living conditions, the food they eat, their housing and their hardships. Instinctively he gets to know the psychology of the working-class population. In the future, no doctor should be allowed to specialise till he has passed several years in general practice.

Furthermore the G.P., such as he is, must form the basis of the future State Medical Service. He has been opposed to the establishment of clinics and health centres, not only because of his living being gradually reduced, but also because he is a skilled craftsman who finds his medical practice slowly deteriorating, himself being subjected to the position of becoming a cross between a clearing-house for hospitals and clinics and a clerk writing out prescriptions for constipation, coughs and colds.

The G.P. is really a victim of monopoly capitalism as applied to medicine. The rich students stay on at hospital and specialise; their less fortunate brothers have to buy practices with borrowed money or become assistants and become completely cut off from hospital practice which is kept exclusively for the breeding of embryo specialists.

In the future State Medical Service which many G.P.s will welcome, because of the relief from financial worries, fixed hours, etc., and which most accept as inevitable, there must still be room left for that intimate personal relationship between doctor and patient which is so characteristic of

British medicine. I once had a prolonged argument with the director of a Soviet polyclinic; he maintained that from the scientific standpoint, patients must be willing to accept any doctor and not object to their medical advisors being continuously changed. This attitude is psychologically wrong, and if the polyclinic is to be the basis of our future Medical Service, as it probably will, modifications must be introduced to enable patients to see their own G.P. and keep in touch with him.

Another fault to be avoided is one which is so manifest in many Continental and American clinics. This is the danger of over-specialisation. The patient, an integrated personality, enters at one door and immediately disintegrates into numerous water-tight compartments; he becomes skin, lungs, heart, bones, etc., and finally emerges from another door with an enormous sheaf of notes with no one to correlate them. This again must be the function of the G.P. in the State Medical Service.

Finally, I make this appeal. Stop kicking the G.P. around. Give him a decent system to work under; make him the basis of the future Medical Service and he in return will do his utmost in the future, as he has done in the past.

N.4. C. ANDERSON, M.B.B.S., M.R.C.P.

18B

SIR,—The story quoted by "Critic" of the woman apiarist detained under Regulation 18B for an injudicious entry in her diary in favour of an Italian queen bee is unfortunately by no means an exception. The National Council for Civil Liberties has dealt with a number of cases where the allegations turned out to be equally absurd, including one where a charge of possessing German propaganda resolved itself in the end to the possession of Swastika flags issued with the *Daily Express* war map.

The objection, however, of my Council to Regulation 18B is based on a much more fundamental issue than the absurdities which occur only too frequently. While there are, no doubt, only a few cases as fantastic as those quoted, it is unfortunately true that a considerable number of people have been detained for the same sort of reasons as those for which many persons were fined and imprisoned at the time of the "Alarm and Despondency" prosecutions. But even so it is probable that a majority of those at present detained are persons who ought to be imprisoned. The objection to the Regulation is that not only are the innocent given no chance to defend themselves, but that the guilty are not proved in the eyes of the world to be guilty. A trial ensures that the activities of the guilty person are thoroughly investigated, his accomplices exposed and his dupes disillusioned. Imprisonment without trial, on the other hand, suggests that the interned person has in fact committed no offence. As neither the charge nor the evidence on which it is based are ever made public, it is impossible for either Parliament or public opinion to ensure that the really guilty are being punished, and that the administration is not hesitating on social or class grounds from dealing with "high-up" Fifth Columnists.

It is important to appreciate how Regulation 18B works. The Home Secretary cannot obviously make a preliminary investigation in every case himself, he must rely upon police reports which the Council's experience has shown are often gleaned from anonymous or spiteful communications by an employer, neighbour, jealous colleague or officious busybody. Once the Order has been made the person against whom it has been made can be indefinitely interned either in a remand prison (such as Brixton), a penal prison (such as Pentonville) or at an internment camp (such as Ascot). The Internee is never informed of the reason why he is interned or of the evidence against him. The only way in which he can discover this is to "state his objections" to an Advisory Committee appointed by the Home Secretary. It is the duty of this Advisory Committee to examine the objections of the internee to his imprisonment which he has, of course, to prepare without knowing the charge on which he is imprisoned. The Regulation, however, does provide that before the hearing by the Advisory Committee he shall be given a statement of the grounds on which the order has been made against him and of such particulars as the chairman thinks are necessary to enable him to present his case. In practice the internee only gets these particulars some three days before the hearing. They are sometimes so indefinite as still not to enable him to discover of what he is accused. It is for practical reasons nearly always impossible for him within such a short time to get in touch with witnesses or to prepare his own case. He is not allowed at the hearing the assistance of either solicitors or Counsel.

On occasion it may take five or six months for an internee's case to reach the Advisory Committee, and very often internees are released before their cases have ever been considered and without the internees ever having learnt the reasons why they were interned.

It is difficult to see how the interests of national security are served by conducting secret trials of this Star Chamber type. In practice Regulation 18B has resulted in many persons being imprisoned who never ought to have been detained at all. "You will be kept locked up and handed over to Hitler when Hitler comes" said one Chief Constable to a well-known local clergyman of left-wing views whom he was having detained under the Regulations and who has been subsequently released. The attitude of mind behind the remark is singularly like that of Chiappe, the notorious Fascist and ex-police president of Paris. But the danger of the Regulation does not arise only from its misapplication in this way. By conducting an inquiry in private it is possible for the political connections of Fascists to be concealed from the public and in fact for the Regulation to be employed as a shield behind which influential persons are able to conceal their activities.

No one would suggest that the present Home Secretary would acquiesce in the Regulation being used for this purpose, but very often the proceedings are only nominally in his hands. He must depend for advice on others, and very often it would seem that even the Advisory Committee can obtain very little information as to the real reason for the detention.

In the view of the National Council for Civil Liberties any person, whatever his political views, is entitled to a fair trial in a court of law, conducted in accordance with those rules of procedure which have long been supposed to make our system of justice more reliable, more just and more democratic than many others. A trial of this nature prevents injustice. Further, it exposes to the public the real nature of Fifth Column activities and in all probability does far more to check them than the mere imprisonment without trial of some of the persons alleged to be guilty of them.

RONALD KIDD
Secretary.
The National Council
for Civil Liberties,
37 Great James Street,
Bedford Row, London, W.C.1.

E.N.S.A. AND C.E.M.A.

SIR,—My attention has been called to an article on wartime entertainments by Mr. Ivor Brown in one of your recent issues. Certain comments in it might lead the casual reader to infer that the work of E.N.S.A. is overlapping that of C.E.M.A. in certain directions. Since the co-ordination of all forms of national service entertainment in the interest of public economy is one of the chief points in E.N.S.A's general policy, one which it is at present actively engaged in urging upon the appropriate authorities, any contrary notion to which the article in question may give rise must be dispelled at once.

Mr. Brown suggests that E.N.S.A. has "butted-in" with its schemes of factory entertainment and shelter concerts, where C.E.M.A. was already in operation. In fact, the work of the two bodies is quite different, as their titles indicate. The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts does a great deal of magnificent work that E.N.S.A. does not touch at all. The Entertainments National Service Association confines itself strictly to the self-imposed task, now officially recognised, of dealing with the various forms of national service entertainment. C.E.M.A. in pursuance of its policy does undertake a certain amount of national service entertainment; but this is not understood to be its basic function. In any event such work is carefully co-ordinated with and assisted by the E.N.S.A. organisation.

None of us should lay claim to prophetic vision in regard to the course of this war, but it may be of passing interest to call attention to sentences in the pamphlet that I caused to be privately printed in April, 1939, on behalf of those who were working upon the E.N.S.A. idea, and circulated to members of the House of Commons and various Ministries, including, I think, the Board of Education.

> This involves the provision of entertainment, not only for the fighting services, but also for the civil population concentrated in the munitions areas and in evacuation centres. . . .

And

> If the national life is to dive underground, then entertainment will follow it there! . .

It was inevitable that E.N.S.A's first assault upon the wartime entertainment problem should lie in the direction of providing shows for the troops. But the pamphlet clearly indicates the intention of the Association to give entertainment to the civil population if circumstances should demand it.

As for the future of E.N.S.A. after the war, that is a matter for the Central Committee to consider when the time comes. It is scarcely conceivable that no useful purpose will be found during the difficult years of reconstruction fot an organisation with such a unique record.

For the rest, Mr. Brown's article may be regarded as fair comment if it comes from the pen of one of our leading dramatic critics, but hardly so if it has been contributed by the Public Relations Officer of C.E.M.A.

BASIL DEAN

THE PROPERTY INSURANCE BILL

SIR,—At long last householders are relieved of a major anxiety—replacement—and the framers of the Bill have made a serious effort to adjust obligations fairly between the interested parties. But, only up to a point where they met with the old, irremovable barrier: the ground landlord.

Take the case of the London leaseholder whose home has been demolished in the past three months: the new Bill justly exempts him from the 10 per cent. annual premium over the next 2-5 years, whilst including him in the cover provided by the payments charged to his more fortunate neighbours. But no clause has been inserted in the Bill to relieve him from the liability to pay the ground rent. Since his property can no longer produce an income, this charge must be met out of personal earnings, out of earnings already overstrained to meet mortgage payments, the rent of alternative accommodation and the ever-rising cost of living!

It may be said that an earlier Act gave him the right to "disclaim the lease," but this was an insult to injury, for by so doing he would forfeit to the ground landlord the whole of the eventual compensation now being provided for by the Bill, and his own capital outlay would be lost.

Equity demands that where the leaseholder has lost his property, the landlord should also forgo his rent: a much smaller sacrifice. Both war victims may receive eventual compensation in the never-never-land of Peace!

R. P. NORTHCOTT

SWAZILAND

SIR,—In your review of Mr. Brian Marwick's book, *The Swazi*, you quote a passage stating that "more people now die of witchcraft than ever did of bloodshed in pre-European days." This must come as a surprise to those not conversant with the deplorable state of affairs in Swaziland, but those of us who live here know it is only too true. The blame for this lies with the Administration, which often turns a blind eye to this terrible evil. To give two instances only. A few years ago a keen young policeman wished to stop a chief's car which he had been told was carrying a murdered body required for "medicine," but was prevented from doing so by orders from the Chief of Police. More recently, after the death of the Paramount Chief's mother, native rumour was most insistent that several natives had been killed off. I have since had this confirmed from other sources and was told that no less than fifteen unexplained deaths occurred.

Your reviewer refers to taxation and says a Protectorate must pay its way, but this is far from being the case. Every year the over-burdened British taxpayer has to pay between £50,000 and £60,000 in grant in aid to keep us going. The native tax of 35s., the highest in Africa, is a most unjust one. Of this sum roughly 10s. goes towards veterinary expenses, yet the native with no cattle has to pay just as much as the chief with hundreds.

Relations between the settlers and the natives, though still good, are not as good as formerly. Those between officials and settlers have deteriorated and are now bad. There is a growing resentment, especially amongst ex-service men, against our higher officials and in particular against the High Commissioner, for their unpatriotic attitude towards the war. Every suggestion by the public towards helping has been turned down, even our request for increased taxation has been rejected. Most of the senior officials did not serve in the last war, and are apparently not concerned in this.

Swaziland. D. R. KEITH

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

MR. JOHN HAYWARD has published recently a little book called *Love's Helicon*. I should have reviewed it before, but it has remained on my mantelpiece like a greetings card for which one hasn't the answer ready. It's an anthology, not a useful book, not *the* anthology of anything, but very much his. The choice is personal and communicates a taste generously and exactly, as did Aldous Huxley a few years ago with his *Texts and Pretexts*. But here there's no commentary, to colour some pages and fox others; only the texts. Mr. Hayward describes his book as a "progress" (emotional, not historical) "of love in English poetry." If it doesn't quite tell a story, it achieves a cycle; *coup de foudre* to everlasting farewells, each phase has its annotation here. One mood is prolonged, another cut off; a poem we have never seen before may be quoted whole, to be followed by a well-known passage torn from its moorings and given new attachments; and almost every page has its windfall of single lines or couplets. The use of fragments, with or without their original flavour, is, I think, new in anthologies.

> I long to talk with some old lover's ghost
> Who died before the god of love was born

—is a half-sentence most felicitously lifted. Whether one happens or not to know that these lines begin a poem by Donne, they strike a chord lovely and complete in itself. I seem to remember that the rest of the poem is far from complete and that one only goes on reading out of a mazed curiosity to learn what questions the poet put to the ghost. Donne's beginnings often have this stabbing effect on the reader, who then assumes the role of caterpillar-grub stung into immobility by devouring wasp: a paralysis designed to last the length of a poem. Where the shot can be isolated from its after-effects (as in the two lines quoted) we experience a lighter, cooler exhilaration. Lines, two or three at a time, have been salvaged by Mr. Hayward from far less abundant quarters. Whose similitude is this?

> As sweet desire of day before the day,
> As dreams of love before the true love born.

Nineteenth-century; so much is not hard to venture; but he would be a wise taster who went on to guess Swinburne. Essence of Swinburne has an unexpected flavour. And here is a Victorian charm, even more difficult to place,

> My blood went up to meet him on my face,
> Glad as a child that hears its father's step
> And runs to meet him at the open porch.

The reference in the index, "A. Smith, *Scorned*," reveals a source from which few have sought refreshment. "Little poems" of this kind, poems within poems, containing an instant or a single thought, are one of the chief delights of reading; but most of us, having browsed, forget. Mr. Hayward has kept track of such adventures. So far as there is an unknown Shakespeare one meets him in the pages of *Love's Helicon*. I doubt if any Chinese poet, working his miniscules, has written more exquisitely than this:

> A lover may bestride the gossamer
> That idles in the wanton summer air,
> And yet not fall, so light is vanity.
>
> * * *
>
> Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
> Than are the tender horns of cockled snails.
>
> * * *
>
> How like a winter hath my absence been
> From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
> What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
> What old December's bareness everywhere.

The compiler's aim has been to give a pointillist picture of love in all moods, and he has pillaged his favourite sources, even colouring a passage, by juxtaposition, with meanings the author never intended. His method—leaving off when he thinks fit, relegating signatures to the end, robbing quotation of its amber—endears itself more and more as one reads on. I have quoted only small examples, because they take less room, but the same exact taste has provided a distich from Pope and a ballad three and a half pages long by George Wither. Each poem or fragment has been chosen for its merits not as poetry but as love-poetry; and the result is enchanting. Never for an instant do we stop to ask, "Why did he put that in? why has this or that been left out?"; such criticism, indeed, becomes irrelevant. Mr. Hayward's pet authors, after Shakespeare and Donne, seem to be Tennyson, Byron, Matthew Arnold, Swinburne, Dryden, Meredith and Christina Rossetti. Not, I may say, my own favourites, but so long as I was reading and re-reading Mr. Hayward's book his taste became mine; and of course the material from earlier centuries has been spread over more names. If you want an ivory tower of love at a time when everyone is busy sharpening his hatreds, an anthology of which you can read every word, beginning with the first and ending with the last, then go and buy a copy of *Love's Helicon* (Duckworth). It is cheap at 5s., and though I have called it a little book, it contains 250 pages not one of which is wasted.

And what are one's impressions after reading? First, about particular authors. Donne, however you look at him, remains the most piercing, the most "modern" of all English poets who have written about love; only Baudelaire, I think, since has enlarged experience in a comparable degree. The two overlap curiously little, but there is a link in breath-taking travel, Donne circling the world for his Newfoundland, Baudelaire lifted on scented hair to forests and quaysides. There is a draughty eternity in

> I stalk about her door
> Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks
> Staying for waftage

which might be set side by side with

> Quand Don Juan descendit vers l'onde souterraine
> Et lorsqu'il eut donné son obole à Charon
> Un sombre mendiant, l'œil fier comme Antisthène,
> D'un bras vengeur et fort saisit chaque aviron.
>
> Montrant leur seins pendants et leurs robes ouvertes,
> Des femmes se tordaient sous le noir firmament,
> Et, comme un grand troupeau de victimes offertes,
> Derrière lui traînaient un long mugissement.

Similar correspondences between these two poet-lovers, between extremes of plunging in and holding off, could be followed closely; and such a bracketing (never, so far as I know attempted), would be the more useful, because it would not rest on superficial resemblances. Reading Donne we do not think—except by a feat of agility—of Baudelaire; and I doubt if Baudelaire had ever heard of this predecessor as strange, though in different ways, as himself.

Of other poets included by Mr. Hayward, Blake and Patmore perhaps excite rumination most. Patmore I find always exciting, always unsatisfactory, to read. Between *The Angel in the House* and *The Unknown Eros* there is an immense gap, which cannot be explained by the author's outward beam and inner light or the respective lures of serial-writing and confessional. The better of these Patmores shares with Hopkins the distinction of thinking by standards other than Victorian; yet his achievement is strangely smoothed and muffled. It may sound an off-hand judgment, but his religious-sexual ecstasy seems to me to fall short because at the same time he knew both too much and too little of what he was doing. In the seventeenth-century mystics a similarly diffused passion resulted in a sexual imagery of which they were quite unaware; Rochester had only to change a word here and there in a hymn of Francis Quarles' to transform it into one of the best love-poems in the language. Now, with Patmore the equation of divine and bodily love is deliberate, enjoyed (one might almost say) down to the last detail; having so far distinguished the components, he tries to lose them again in a self-induced trance, in a whiteness of discovery, and that is where his poetry—as poetry, be it understood—lets one down. The revelation comes cold.

Blake is the only—yes, the *only*—writer among all these, to whom one looks for the fusion of beauty and truth. (The famous conjunction of Keats, by the way, means only that we read his poetry for the first and his letters for the second.) In Blake, even among the hundred or so lines dotted about here, we find the instinctive union of sense and spirit grasped at by Patmore. Mysticism pure led him into fields where the reader pants after footfalls in a fog, but as a seer of the senses, with a mastery of simple forms, his touch is infallible. *The Pebble and the Clod* (included here) and *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* contain more wisdom about love than *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Romeo and Juliet* rolled into one.

A mirage of Love, as it has always been sought by a few and never found, hangs over any collection of writing on this theme. A few commonplaces—that love is eternal and time fleeting, or the other way round—provide all the thinking, the rest is sensation. At one point in the development of English poetry—with the Elizabethans—this Arcadia came near to finding a home. Poetry and music for the last time were inseparable and inseparably "the food of love"; the lovers were rustic and yet enjoyed all the refinements of the court; everything was ideal from silks to jealousies. Poets then wrote not as personal lovers but out of a lifelong courtship of Love; Herrick could even enjoy dull Devonshire, with a pig and a small living and smacking country flesh, while he dreamed his Julias in verse. The only requisite for this ideal poetry, besides talent, was that relations between pen and paper should not be platonic. That "simple tune" ends with the Puritan revolution, though poets in all ages have harked back since. The "simple tune," when it pops up, for example, in Tennyson or Housman, is no longer simple but would-be simple, because we cannot think now except in terms of a more complex harmony. Strike out an air on a piano, and you may think that all you hear is the single line of a tune, but any musician will tell you that the ear, wittingly or not, supplies its chords.

By a curious coincidence two other anthologies of love appear at the same time, with the same object of turning the wheel of experience. Both of these include marriage, a topic skirted by Mr. Hayward. *Homage to Hymen* (H. Yaffe, *Faber*, 8s. 6d.) is the livelier and more subtle of the two. Mr. Yaffe has roped in prose and verse, and gone as far afield as the Talmud, Samuel Butler's translation of the *Odyssey*, and the delightful anonymous *Menagier de Paris* translated some years ago by Eileen Power. The best of many surprises is Mr. Justice Maule's Judgment on a Bigamist, a superb piece of satire delivered in court, which did much to bring forward the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857. I recommend *Homage to Hymen* even to those who have no intention of getting married; it is unusually readable, and I found its mixture of poetry and sex ethics, anthropology and scenes from novels, delightful. *The Compleat Lover* (William Geoffrey, *Joseph*, 7s. 6d.) is less distinctive, and sometimes strains tenderness to the point of letting in the second-rate; but here, too, the compiler, gripped by his subject, has gone out of his way to collect good things.

G. W. STONIER

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

The Materialist Conception of History. By G. V. PLEKHANOV. *Lawrence and Wishart.* 1s. 6d.

This interesting essay well deserved republication, though it has not been very well edited. In form, it is a review article of a classic essay of the Italian socialist Labriola; in substance, Plekhanov was using Labriola's book partly to set out his own views, and partly to attack a number of Russian writers who were either hostile to the Marxist outlook or guilty of deforming it. There is nothing in the essay that will not be well known to all serious students of the subject, especially to those who have read the admirable letters in which Engels defined once and for all what Marx and he meant by their method. But Plekhanov writes with great clarity and a good deal of charm. It is a pity that the editors did not provide explanatory notes for references to names which are not likely to be known to many English readers. Certainly, Chatsky, Kudrin, Krivenko, and G. Zerukovsky are not names the arguments of whom are even likely to be hotly debated in the *arcana imperii* of King Street.

In the form in which Plekhanov states his theory, it is difficult to see how any sensible person can object to it. "Man makes his history in trying to satisfy his needs. . . . The productive forces at man's disposal determine all his social relations. . . . These relations naturally give rise to definite interests, which are expressed in law. . . . The development of productive forces divides society into classes whose interests are not only different, but in many—and, moreover, essential—respects are diametrically antagonistic. This antagonism of interests gives rise to conflicts, to a struggle among the social classes. The struggle results in the replacement of the tribal organisation by the state organisation, the purpose of which is to protect the dominant interests. Lastly, social relations, determined by the given state of the productive forces, give rise to common morality, that is, that guides people in their common, everyday life."

This seems no more than elementary common sense. Plekhanov, indeed, was careful to note the importance, to the historian, of a knowledge of social psychology; the thoughts and sentiments of a people influence, as they are influenced by, its social relations. But, in a fundamental way, those thoughts and sentiments do not change unless the social relations change. New beliefs, new fashions, new ideas are always ultimately conditioned by the social relations of time and place. Ideas like those of the Levellers are the intelligible outcome of social relations in seventeenth-century England; it would be folly to expect them in fourth-century Rome. An artist like Cézanne is intelligible in the second half of the nineteenth century; it would be, equally, folly to expect him at the court of Louis XIV. The failure to develop a political Labour Party in the United States is intelligible to anyone who looks at the economic possibilities of that country as they must have appeared to the average immigrant at any time before the great depression. The "religion of inequality," as Mr. Tawney has termed it, in this country well explains why a sentimental Liberal like Ramsay MacDonald found his way here into the Labour Party; and that "religion of inequality" is inexplicable except in terms of an economic history, the roots of which go back at least to that Revolution of 1688 which did not need to become revolutionary.

Plekhanov puts his case with persuasive moderation. Not the least interesting part of what he has to say is the vigour and insight of his asides. One of them, at least, is peculiarly pertinent to-day. "Social science will gain greatly," he wrote, "if we at last abandon the bad habit of attributing to race everything that seems incomprehensible in the spiritual history of a given nation." It was Disraeli, I think, who insisted that "everything is race." German historiography won much of its lead in the world of scholarship by refusing to accept that mysticism. It is amusing to think that, under Hitler's direction, the new generation of German historians is so busily engaged in elaborating the aphorism of the great Jewish statesman.

HAROLD J. LASKI

AN INTRODUCTION TO AN INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Proust. By DERRICK LEON. *Kegan Paul.* 12s. 6d.

Outside the memoirs of those who knew him personally, there is very little that is worth reading on the subject of Proust. I can think of nothing that goes as deep as Edmund Wilson's brief essay, and after reading Mr. Leon's painstaking study, I still feel that we have yet to wait for a definitive pulling-together of the whole business. Business is the word; for Proust was the least objective novelist who ever lived, and a criticism of his book is inseparable from an examination of himself and his life. Essentially a man of one book, he lived his novel in a far more intimate sense than most novelists can be said to live their fictions; in some sort the modern equivalent of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, it is memoirs at one remove. In saying this I am not decrying the consummate art with which the greater part of it is done, but stating rather the distance which separates it from the *roman-roman* and gives it a special position in the history of fiction, for, apart from Goethe's memoir-fantasy, there is only one other book which it calls to mind and that is *Obermann*.

To write at all satisfactorily about Proust requires an intimate knowledge of France, of French art, and of French social life. The first two are easy enough to acquire, the third far more difficult, and it would seem to be a lack of this kind of knowledge that is responsible for the superficiality of Mr. Leon's exegesis, as well as for the strange errors in his account of Proust himself and his world. Thus he gives a detailed description, complete with anecdotes, of Paris Society in Proust's youth, but without suggesting a first-hand knowledge of even its modern equivalent, or indeed of French life at all. He is evidently fascinated by the spectacle, in very much the same way as Proust himself might have been fascinated by an account of, say, Esquimaux society. It is a small point, but indicative, that many of the proper names are wrongly accented; anybody might mistake Dorgelès for Dorgèles, but surely the author of a 300-page book on such a subject ought to know better than to write "Dégas" for Degas, and "Fézensac" for Fezensac.

One had not expected to have to accuse the author of that able novel, *Livingstones*, of naivety; but disingenuousness or timidity seem even less likely, yet they are the only other explanations possible, at this time of day, for refusing to recognise the fact that Proust was typically and profoundly homosexual, and that this aberration was responsible for the inextricable maze of what he was pleased to consider an universally valid analysis of love. It was answerable also for the contradictions and inconsistencies in the character of Albertine and her affair with the hero, features that puzzle Mr. Leon but which immediately become clear when it is realised that the "original" of Albertine (as one had thought everybody interested in Proust must know by this time) was a man and that Proust's efforts to present him

PENGUIN NEW WRITING

When the first volume of PENGUIN NEW WRITING was published late in 1940, it was hoped to produce further volumes from time to time, which would, as Number 1, consist of selections of stories already published in NEW WRITING. The reception was so promising, however, that it was decided to issue it as a monthly, adding to already published material entirely new contributions and a number of topical features. The first volume in its new form (PENGUIN NEW WRITING 2, published to-day) contains:

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Edited by
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as a woman resulted in the only imperfectly realised character in the whole book. A further result (not noticed by Mr. Leon) of Proust's inability to conceive the happy give-and-take of real, as opposed to neurotic and therefore self-centred, love, is that the three big love-affairs in the book—Marcel and Gilberte, Odette and Swann, Marcel and Albertine—all follow exactly the same lines, so that the first two seem, on a second reading, to be try-outs for the third and thus to some extent otiose.

It is evidently the same basic misunderstanding that has tempted Mr. Leon to describe Proust's character along the lines of what Mr. Stephen Potter would call Eng. Lit.; for to suggest that this neurotic invalid, perpetually wrapped in a dense cocoon of egotism, was *really* sweet or kind or spontaneous is to assume a falsehood. Where his work or his emotions were concerned, Proust was a ruthless old baby, with no more genuine love or consideration for others than Harold Skimpole. But, for reasons which cannot be deployed here, he needed a tender and protective attitude towards himself on the part of everybody without exception, —needed it desperately; and being completely intelligent he knew the way to get it. The methods he employed fooled lots of people some of the time, but not all people all the time: Robert de Montesquiou, for instance, being akin to Proust in temperament, was not deceived for long. However, the method appears to have cozened Mr. Leon from beyond the grave; otherwise he would scarcely describe his hero's fantastic susceptibility, and the capital he made out of it, as "simply the spontaneous expression of an affectionate and generous nature." To use a mixture of cajolery, flattery (see some of Proust's more nauseous letters) and spiritual blackmail to force your friends to do exactly what you want—however burdensome and inconvenient it may be to them—is not a mark of true friendship or even of ordinary kindness. Nor did Proust over-tip waiters, as Mr. Leon seems to think, out of unworldly generosity; he did it because he feared cold looks more than anything else in the world. And the "half-embarrassed" smile with which they took the tips was surely not one of "genuine" thanks: it will have been the sly smile with which over-tipped servants always greet *un idiot qui ne sait pas vivre*. The simpler people are the less easy it is to deceive them in matters of this kind, for unspoilt instinct is a correct informer. Inarticulate persons see straighter, farther and more rapidly than those whose vision has been blurred by the habitual veil of glib phrases.

To get *Remembrance of Things Past* properly into focus requires at least two entire readings. After that, what remains to give permanent delight is not, I think, what fascinated one most at the first reading—*viz.*, the penetrating analysis of the mind and habits of homosexuals, the clever comparisons (often simply not worth making and nearly always too laboured), the elaboration of the jealousy-motif and the endless cadence of the Albertine affair. At the third reading all this palls horribly; *La Prisonnière* and *Albertine Disparue* become deserts with infrequent oases; and what is enduringly valuable appears the more clearly: the silver-point humour (Mr. Leon does not make nearly enough of this); the ability with which characterisation-by-dialogue is achieved; the impressionistic landscapes; the skill with which the "taste" of childhood is communicated and the use made of this to throw light on the subject of art. For Proust applied a method of syncretism to the novel which was entirely new to the art, a syncretism that eventually issued in the surrealist apocalypse.

I do not wish to leave the impression that this book is entirely without merit. Mr. Leon's account of the sources and general *Weltanschauung* of a great modern novel is adequate as far as it goes; my complaint is that it does not go nearly far enough. Meanwhile, those who intend to attack Proust for the first time, as a distraction from thoughts of the war (and they could hardly find a better—except perhaps *The Faerie Queen*), are recommended not to neglect this book, for its enthusiasm will encourage them. EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

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WORLD REVIEW

PRICE 1/- PUBLISHED BY HULTON

materialism and all, are *psychologically* out of date, the true revelation yet to come?

Here are three writers who endeavour to throw light on the present confusion. Mr. Tolischus, former *New York Times* correspondent in Berlin, in a workmanlike if rather unilluminated account of the Nazi Reich, stresses the ruthless, the grotesque regimentation of the eighty million Germans to the sole purpose of war. But how did this come about? Mr. Tolischus has little more than an American journalist's conventional suggestions. The last war was apparently dominated, on the German side, by Friedrich Nietzsche:

> The present war, almost unbeknown to the Allies and the Germans themselves, is dominated by Richard Wagner—not the Richard Wagner of the incomparable, though still debated, melodies, but the Richard Wagner who had brought to life the dismal, pitiless and forgotten world of German antiquity, the world of fighting gods and fighting heroes, of dragons and demons . . . which has become subconscious reality to the German people.

But to say that the Germans of to-day, i.e. the German factory workers, shop assistants, garage hands, cinema-goers, newspaper readers of the Weimar Republic, suddenly allowed themselves to be dominated by a spell which was originally Wagner's is to give no explanation of *why* the psychological breaking-point of modern German society occurred. What is interesting, however, is the glimpse of the new society Mr. Tolischus gives us:

> Germany was still far from the common wretchedness of "classless" Russian Bolshevism, but the drift was unmistakable. And like all levelling processes, the German process was levelling down, not up.

Professor Polanyi, dealing with Russia, sees much the same social process. Like Mr. Tolischus's book, his seems already dated, belonging to the inertia, the fears and illusions of the "Left Book Club phase" of 1935–39, which seems like a vanished age in this grim winter of 1940–41. As a believer in freedom, Professor Polanyi tries to refute the unreal picture of the U.S.S.R. popularised a year or two back in England, when the seemingly unstoppable drift to war had thrown up a desperate faith in Stalin. Professor Polanyi knows his subject; a man like Bukharin to him is not a cypher, but someone with whom he has argued; he shows that the living standards of the Russians under Stalin are to-day in some respects deplorably low, that Soviet Russia has many dreary sides, and scientific enquiry flourishes ill under the Cheka. To-day, after Stalin's pact with Hitler and his Finnish fiasco, all this seems obvious enough; what is remarkable is that only a year or two back all this would have been passionately denied. Professor Polanyi also brings out, however, that the present primitive Soviet State *has* become accepted by the population as a hard but inevitable form of society. "State management by a bureaucracy linked to the working class is a new and valid expression of economic consciousness for the workers." But what Professor Polanyi fails to show is where the break came—the vital break between the vivid, over-intellectualised Russian revolutionary world of men like Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Lunacharsky, Rakovsky, Gorky, and the clumsy, German-influenced Russian bureaucratic State of to-day, which may be the crude beginning of a new order but seems to have so little connection with the great revolutionary past.

Are we in the West before a similar social turning-point to-day, as the bombs rip the untidiness of London? Mr. Hunt, who thinks he can help us against the bombardment, is a Popular Psychologist; the long list of his titles—*How to Use Your Mind*, *A Book of Auto-Suggestion*, etc., brought me memories of Praed Street where, hurrying westward every evening to my railway terminus, I passed stalls of books and magazines on "Practical Psychology" side by side with those advertising nudism and physical culture. And Mr. Hunt's opening, where he claims that "the mysterious field of the Unconscious" was still too much neglected in Britain, compared with Germany or America, or his epilogue on Spiritualist evidence, God, and British righteousness, seemed in keeping with the impression.

But as against this, Mr. Hunt's chapters on Nazi propaganda tactics are quite exceptionally good; well worth reading. He draws a telling parallel between this propaganda and the tactics of the hypnotist: the effect of complete press, radio and news censorship is like the isolation of the hypnotised patient, because without comparison there can be no independent judgment; the effect of the hypnotist's voice is paralleled in the totalitarian State by the incessant use of the broadcast voice, which, as Mr. Hunt says, even intelligent people find it difficult to resist, because "it has a status of its own; you cannot argue with it, nor yet contradict it. It not only has the last word, but all the words there are."

Here and there, among many pages which it is difficult to read, Mr. Hunt gives us more such acute psychological observations, about the failure of the British Ministry of Information, about Hitler's close and avowed copy of Roman Catholic dogma, about the cutting of the mooring ropes to reality within Nazi Germany, and about the inevitable way in which bombing raids against civilians must partly defeat themselves because the civilians gradually grow accustomed to them, to the sound of bombs, guns and all, and sleep and hardly care.

But even as we adapt ourselves to the bombardment we are changing fast. In the cauldron of war, the temper and outlook of the populations of England and Germany, France and Italy, and even America are changing fast, like our views on class privileges, on communal living, on the choice between wealth and security.

Mr. Hunt can give us no more than hints of these changes. But if, for instance, Prof. Laski in "Where Do We Go From Here?" has given us an economist's half-view of present history, there is clear need for a psychological historian, with his finger on the pulse of modern street life, to show us the equally important other half.

T. R. FYVEL

S-O-S, GOSS!

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There is no division so absolute as the sense of quality. Everything else—class, brains, vitality, even health—admits of compromise between the haves and the have-nots; but between those who see the difference and those who don't there yawns an unbridgeable gulf. Were it only a question of the arts, perhaps it wouldn't matter so much. Unhappily there is not a corner of life uninvaded by these dissensions: wireless, food, tea, the temperature of the room, clothes, dogs, jokes, words—all, all provoke the inevitable schism. Nor is it, for the most part, anything so simple as good taste *versus* bad taste; it is rather discrimination *versus* non-discrimination, taste *versus* indifference—that serene, blanketing indifference which to the Englishman makes satire and irony not so much unwelcome as totally incomprehensible. To him a joke is not something to be enjoyed on its merits *qua* joke; it is a symbol of good humour demanding loud laughter if made in the recognised way, by a good bloke, on the recognised joke-themes (pubs, women, servants, a few more—see *Punch*). If, on the other hand, the joke is of doubtful provenance and aimed at snobs or dog-worshippers, it is simply not a recognisable Class A joke at all. Even those who, like Low and the Western Brothers, contrive to extend the joke-area, can do so only by creating a fresh group of untouchables; with the result that it is becoming as difficult to poke fun at foolish detractors of Col. Blimp or the Old School Tie as it formerly was to jest at the sacred objects themselves.

In life and in literature E. F. Benson was a master of discrimination. A sense of humour, a sense of quality—these are the flavours that permeate every page of his last book; they are as unmistakable as the savoury smell that hangs about a good kitchen. Everything that comes out of that kitchen is treated with the same care and skill; there is no browning, no tin-opener, no sauce out of the bottle. The prose style of E. F. Benson's final works (the trilogy of reminiscences and the best of the biographies) does not seem to me to have received enough praise, though it is surely the perfection of melodious courtesy. Beguiling, perfectly mannered, his sentences slip past unnoticed, precisely fulfilling their author's principle.

> I demand that prose should have a certain intrinsic beauty of its own quite apart from the meaning it conveys. This beauty is quite consistent with the utmost lucidity and does not depend at all on decoration.

He finished *Final Edition* just before his death, and a publisher's note tells us that he devoted exceptional pains to its revision. It would therefore have been a kindness to clean up the few sentences which illness obliged him to leave untidy or ill-punctuated; they show like a dandelion on the centre court at Wimbledon.

Apart from its immense readability and ceaseless flow of appropriate and amusing anecdote, *Final Edition* has the interest of containing remarkably candid disquisitions on the literary personalities (they were all literary to the bone) of the author and his famous brothers. Those who knew A. C. Benson were aware of far more in that acute intelligence than the armchair piety of his popular essays; and E. F.'s discussion of A. C.'s dual nature makes one long for the uncensored publication of the voluminous and highly inflammatory diaries of the Master of Magdalene.

> The evangelist of a placid reflective life told him that his university work was a very second-rate affair, while the busy effective don looked with scorn on the cheap facility of the writing which so large a circle of readers found inspirational. Below his ceaseless industry he recognised that his mind was essentially lazy, he did not take the trouble to think out these problems for which he prescribed faith and tranquillity, as if these could be procured at a chemist's, like a bottle of opodeldoc to be well rubbed in and for external application only.

That is admirable, and on Hugh's Catholicism the light, though kinder, is scarcely less penetrating. Penetrating it remained, even when turned inwards upon the amusing, successful

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PURELY PERSONAL

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novelist which was all that, by middle age, E. F. Benson had made of himself. The gaiety of his novels was threadbare, they did not bear re-reading; and this worried him as it would not have worried his brothers. Alone of the brilliant Bensons, of whom he appeared the least distinguished, E. F. had the discrimination and self-criticism to see what was petty in his busy intellectual life and what was trivial in his productions. In the middle of a prosperous and admired career he deliberately set himself to make a clean sweep and do better. Among the books that resulted, *Charlotte Brontë* is a capital biography; but it is the three volumes of reminiscence—*As We Were, As We Are* and the present volume—which constitute his real achievement. Pretending only to sketch in the surface traits of his time, and relying upon that highly developed instinct of discrimination and that impeccable style, E. F. Benson produced something small but durable, an agreeable footnote to history which many future readers will prefer to the solemn text itself.

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Autobiography, as we know, is an art, a difficult, even a painful art. It demands from the writer two things: the severest discipline in choosing a route in the vast, untidy, straggling landscape of his life and, even more important, a peculiar honesty that will avoid public faking, that smaller or greater degree of exhibitionism to which most of us are subject, if we are not victims of an opposite tendency, the guilty need to conceal. None of the books on my list even competes for this class. But the restrictions belonging to the art apply in a modified way to the derivative craft: even to these autobiographies which are originated by nothing more noble than a readiness to satisfy healthy, vulgar curiosity. We are all curious about what goes on behind the private faces, stodgy, saturnine or gay, that meet us every morning in tube or bus. How much more so about the public faces, truculent, pompous or would-be impressive that stare at us out of photographs.

The Stage is the natural goal of the exhibitionist. Yet Matheson Lang's record of plays, parts and tours is noticeably sober, never indulges the profession's peculiar vice. And his many admirers will, no doubt, find their curiosity satisfied—but only on a professional level. They are given interesting glimpses of personalities behind the curtain—Ellen Terry, Mrs. Langtry, Sir Herbert Tree and so on—but they must not look here for any exploitation of the private life.

Mr. Wignall's book is of the same kind, a professional record. He has made his name as a sporting journalist who creates interest because he is always creating controversy. Starting off with a disquisition on autobiography, prompted by memories of discussing the subject with Arnold Bennett and Somerset Maugham, he soon moves into the behind-the-scenes record of a reporter's life from the days when the journalist was a low-grade employee at a couple a pounds a week, to to-day when he commands the attentions of hostesses and fan-mail writers. The ascent is on the steps of dead controversies—Carpentier's fouls, Body Line, greyhound racing—to higher things, such as the invocation to the spirit of sporting England which ends his book.

Mrs. Riehm's is a more modern, less conventional book. With her husband, Lucas, she kept a bar at Tossa after they had escaped from Germany. The Spanish war overtook their modest enterprise. Lucas went off to join the International Brigade; there is a comic interlude in prison, a visit to the Brigade's headquarters, shortage of food, lice, a children's colony and the escape across the mountains into France. Mrs. Riehm overdoes her affection for her husband and her use of the historic present. Otherwise her slice of life has the attraction of vividness and simplicity and gives a feel of what it was like to be a civilian in the first engagement of this war.

Of the five authors Colonel Wedgwood is best qualified to write a good reflective autobiography—if only he had the time. His background and upbringing supplied the values which guided a life of action in the thick of events; and he is equipped with a singular personal honesty. The early part of *Memoirs of a Fighting Life* which describes that background, a family of master craftsmen on one side and on the other connections with the circle of Darwin, promises a detached and revealing book:

> The Wedgwoods have great merit, being sure of their position and themselves; but it is a provincial leadership, a little aloof from the world, a little out of date, too condescending, gracious, silent—good rather than clever. The Rendles on the other hand were brilliant, picturesque, at the centre of the great machine of civilisation.

And he sees his own childhood objectively, as part of a liberal family tradition:

> Character, like prejudice, is largely dependent upon what is expected of one, is dependent upon that public opinion which is another expression of environment. . . . Independence, courage, conscience and self-reliance . . . come easily from that heredity which is fostered by public opinion, by what is expected of us and known to each as being expected. The last six generations have been great humanitarians, so that, too, is now expected of us and goes into the melting pot of character in very early days. We are expected to do well at school in lessons (except spelling) and so scholarship comes easily; we are not expected to do well at games, and do not so excel.

But as soon as public life begins, this reflective note falls away. The mere flood of events is too large and powerful. The press cutting album, one suspects, becomes the source book. The Boer War, Milner's Kindergarten, parliament, the Great War, Commissions, the rise of the Labour Party—the procession of history whirls by with Colonel Wedgwood fighting somewhere in the middle of it. Always fighting, for this Radical always found something to oppose; he was, it was said, "an opposition in himself." The last ten years make rather sad reading: the Radicals were right and it is cold comfort to be in Cassandra's shoes with a ready "I told you so" on the lips. There is one agreeable story of these years when, in 1934, Colonel Wedgwood met Churchill, just come from lunching with the Cabinet to meet Ribbentrop. Mr. Churchill gave his explanation of this rather surprising invitation:

> Well, I suppose they asked me to show him that if they couldn't bark themselves, they kept a dog who could bark and might bite.

This record from the inside is, of course, fascinating to anyone interested in politics and includes some lively asides and comments. But at the end I found myself regretting the more reflective book which the earlier pages had promised, and which is crowded out by so much action. One day when—or, perhaps I should say, if—Colonel Wedgwood gets old and has the leisure, he ought to write it.

Finally, there is *Me in Wartime*, successor to *Me* (38,000) and to *Me again* (only 10,000). No title could be more exhibitionist except

Mr. Agate's, and anyhow the author of *Ego* (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc., etc.) gives his personal blessing on the wrapper. But, then, Miss Jacob also comes from the stage. "I'm an old pro" she repeats every three or four pages, and really her book (or, to be strictly honest, parts of it) is irresistible. Miss Jacob sets out to be the average middle-class woman. Not the upper middle-class woman, mind you, not Mrs. Miniver. Mrs. Miniver came out of the top drawer but one, you remember. Miss Jacob is much too sensible to bother about the drawers. She notices Mrs. and Captain Miniver, only incidentally, as stuck-up sillies; Miss Jacob is a democrat, she says. She was also a pacifist; although now she says she likes a uniform instead. Still she *was* a pacifist, while Mrs. Miniver was too circumscribed by her army connections and her genteel taste ever to have been positively anything except the wife of Captain Miniver. Miss Jacob, like the average middle-class woman, is vulgar and sentimental—but at least alive. Not, of eourse, that Miss Jacob is an A.M.W. at all. A.M.W.'s aren't, as a rule, old pros, and haven't moved around like Miss Jacob. Being an old pro of the pen as well as of the boards, Miss Jacob has a nice observation for types, how they look and how they behave, and far the best parts of her book are the descriptions of incidents and people and places—and her funny stories. The parts I couldn't take (but then they are, after all, addressed to the A.M.W.) are the reflections on Life, War, Religion, Children, and Dogs. Sentiment, common sense, practical advice and balderdash are here mixed up inextricably:

> No one possessing any common fairness will deny that Hitler has done great things for Germany, that he has raised her from a slough of despond, set her on her feet.

And she was equally enthusiastic about Musso *before*. It isn't wickedness, of course; just plain dumpy female stupidity combined with goodness of heart. Miss Jacob has the largest of hearts. It's a pity she underestimates the size of other people's heads. But you ought to read parts of *Me in Wartime* to see what the average middle-class woman is like. You may be agreeably surprised to find that in spite of silly prejudices and persistent sentimentalities, she has improved a lot.

THOMAS SMALLBONES

Week-end Competitions

No. 571

Set by L. V. Upward

Obeying his doctor's orders, an actor, about to play Shylock, visits a dentist. In the waiting-room he mentally rehearses his court speech, "I have possessed . . . ." But the nearer of his ordeals upsets his memory; probe and drill, as it were, replace pig and cat as objects of repulsion. The usual prizes are offered for a revised version of the speech (not exceeding 24 lines) made under such circumstances. It should begin: "I have possessed you, doctor, of my symptoms."

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, January 20th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 568

Set by George Thomas

You receive a book token. You must imagine that you are in turn each of the following (*a*) a low-brow undergraduate, (*b*) a middle-brow housewife, (*c*) a high-brow sclerotic general. In each of these characters you are asked to choose the two books your token would go to, and they must be books published in England during the last twelve months.

Report by George Thomas

One of the disadvantages of this competition which did not dawn on the setter until he began opening the envelopes, was that the more sensible and workmanlike the suggestions, the less entertaining they would be to read. Many competitors sent in book lists which show how skilfully, if given a book token, they could discern others' tastes.

But I had hoped for something a little more than bare bones; advice is usually more palatable with a dash of malice or flippancy. Perhaps if the characters of book recipients had been indicated in more detail, competitors would have responded with more liveliness. As it was, though one or two entrants were witty, even the Sclerotic General was treated too dully. Among the straight lists H. C. Withers dropped a spark:

(*a*) A Low-brow Undergraduate: (1) *Never a Dull Moment*, by Trevor Wignall; (2) †*Oriri*, by Marie C. Stopes.

(*b*) A Middle-brow Housewife: (1) *Ego* 4, by James Agate; (2) *Fables of Our Time*, by Thurber.

(*c*) A High-brow Sclerotic General: (1) *Aeschylus and Athens*, by George Thomson; (2) *Aegean Memories*, by Compton Mackenzie.

† Owing to a misconception.

(H. C. Withers)

I recommend that a first prize be equally divided between "Tor" and Stanley J. Sharpless, and no second prize be awarded.

I

(*a*) The Undergraduate said: "A Book Token! Hell! Why couldn't the old girl have sent me the money instead?" and went out to buy:

(1) *Animol, Vegetable and South Kensington*, by Nicholas Bentley (Methuen, 5*s*.).

(2) *The Man Who Could Not Shudder*, by John Dickson Carr (Hamish Hamilton, 7*s*. 6*d*.).

(*b*) The Middle-brow Housewife was earnest and prided herself on being Broadminded and Cultured, and her token went to:

(1) *Christianity—or Chaos*, by Ethel Mannin (Hutchinson, 7*s*. 6*d*.).

(2) *Oriri*, by Marie Stopes (Heinemann, Ltd., 3*s*. 6*d*.).

(*c*) The Sclerotic General read the *Spectator* as well as the *Observer* and *Sunday Times*, so his Book Token went to:

(1) *War for World Power*, by "Strategicus" (Faber, 10*s*. 6*d*.).

(2) *The Army of the Future*, by that fellah de Gaulle, 8*s*. 6*d*.

"TOR"

II

(*a*) Low-brow Undergraduate:

(1) *Quick Service*, by P. G. Wodehouse. ("Always safe with P. G.—and I need a good belly laugh, anyway.")

(2) *Murder at the Munition Works*, by G. D. H. and M. Cole. ("Those two know how to turn out a decent Who Dunnit. They're strong Labour or something, aren't they?")

(*b*) Middle-brow Housewife:

(1) *The Voyage*, by Charles Morgan. ("I like Mr. Morgan. You always feel there's something *in* his books. He writes for the *Times*, of course.")

(2) *The Bright Pavilions*, by Sir Hugh Walpole. ("One feels out of it at Bridge unless one has read the latest Walpole.")

(*c*) High-brow General:

(1) *Dynamic Defence*, by Liddell Hart. ("One of the few army men who are not at least two wars behind.")

(2) *Ritzkrieg*, by Michael Barsley. ("The *New Statesman* extracts were bloody funny.")

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

The mottoes in Christmas Crackers are usually moralising couplets which may or may not be suitable to those who open them. Competitors are asked to write a set of five mottoes each suitable for any sufficiently well-known person or body, from a member of the Cabinet to the *Daily Express*.

On the whole, Cracker mottoes are written by simple people for simple people. Naïvety should be the note, and the only sophistication should consist in a degree of naïvety beyond naïvety. Most competitors, but not all, realised this and most competitors produced at least one quotable motto, even when they didn't. Thus Mrs. Ordish's motto

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University Correspondence College

THE CASE FOR HITLER

Ha! I thought that would get you. Now what I really wanted to tell you is that any book reviewed or advertised in this paper can be borrowed for a very small fee and sent to you by post. For full particulars write, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope, to:—Heelas, 4/24, Colsterworth Rd., S. Tottenham, N.15

for Roosevelt was perfectly in keeping:

I hope it's arms across the sea,
This bright New Year, from you to me.

Or Mr. Cresswell, for Lord Woolton:

The rose is red, the violet blue
Sugar was sweet—and then came you.

R. S. Jaffray, for Priestley:

Silence is golden in or out of season
But wise men speak when others lack a reason.

William Stewart, for Bernard Shaw:

To be more wise than other men
Seems rather foolish now and then.

Of the more sophisticated I liked especially Richard Pomfret for Dr. Buchman:

Is it absolutely cricket
Batting on the Oxford wicket?

and Edgar Holt, for Sir Samuel Hoare:

Life's bitterest blow is to know that Laval
May bob up some day and address one as "pal."

Sir Robert Witt, for Anthony Eden:

You left me in disdain; resigned but not in vain
I do not then complain, you cut but come again.

Mr. Cresswell, for Mussolini:

Nature abhors a vacuum: first
The big frogs swell and then they burst.

R. B. W., for Halifax:

Short and fat
And none the better for that
Long and thin
And little in.

William Stewart, for Captain Margesson:

Dictators when they come to grips
Will find men won't be ruled by whips.

But the difficulty, as always in this kind of competition, is to sustain a level. N. Lewis seemed to me a clear winner on these grounds and he wins the first prize. The second is divided between Stock-Cross and A. M. C.

FIRST PRIZE

Halifax:

Fish in decay may glow: words whitewash deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

Nuffield:

Dives in Heaven beheld a throne that shone.
He smiled—then frowned. It bore the name ANON.

Hoare:

He whose feet stand in two camps
In time may suffer from the cramps.

Gollancz:

Who blows his trumpet keeps the mouthpiece clean,
And guards the laws of libel and hygiene.

An A.T.:

Virgin, take heed: this armour firm eschew;
For if Jove tremble, what shall Hymen do?

N. LEWIS

SECOND PRIZES

Capt. Margesson:

Carrots, with donkeys, serveth
Oft-times better than a whip.

Hotel self-evacuating persons:

In this world of turmoil
Two things stand like stone;
Courage in another's trouble,
Kindness in your own.

Political cartoonists:

He that is Low need fear no fall,
Though all should draw to an end.

Mr. C. H. Middleton:

Earth hath not anything to yield more fair,
Than a rugose voice upon the balmy air.

Sagittarius:

Swift came the Archer
Piercing the veil;
The female of the species
Is more deadly than the male.

STOCK-CROSS

The Tory Party:

Now Left is Red, and Right is True-blue
But True Britons like us are Red-White-and-Blue.

The *Daily Express*:

My first is Circulation
My second is Isolation
My third is the Good of the Nation—What am I?

Margesson:

Tally-ho over, Tally-ho back
Now the Whip's left the hunt,
Who'll follow the pack?

The Nazis:

Open your mouth and shut your eyes
And Follow your Leader to Paradise.

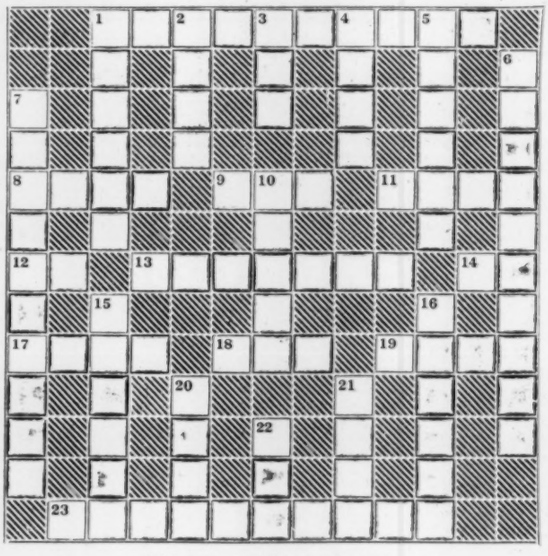
The Railway Companies (per cent.—an interpretation of the old rhyme about Hours of Sleep):

Nature gives us five
Custom allows seven
Greed hopes for nine
Wickedness takes eleven.

A. M. C.

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 14

Set by V. S.



The last week's winner is:

S. Hughes, 19 Molesham Way, West Molesey, Surrey

ACROSS

1. Cheering hotel reception. (10)
8 and 9. Heart-breakingly vile. (7)
9. See 8.
11. 12 each way. (4)
12 and 14. Tell-tale companion of girl of 13? (4)
13. The value of the bloody sovereign, in short. (7)
14. See 12, doc! (2)
17. No Capital For The English Socialist. (4)
18. Mixed doubles court. (3)
19 *rev.* A pretty French victim of original murder. (4)
23. Positively better under canvas. (4 and 6).

DOWN

1. Panel patient's complaint? (6)
2. Particular place in France. (4)
3 and 22. One instrument in another. (6)
4. R. (4)
5. At the centre or at either end. (6)
6. . (5 and 5)
7. 2nd, 15th, 21st, 14th and 4th letters do. (5 hyphen 5)
10. Place where things are discarded by the nudist member. (5)
15. Smooth manner of some stars holding a gun in Hollywood. (6)
16 Last month's post to write or last but one. (6)
20. Where to keep a horse collar attachment. (4)
21. Takes me in charge. (4)
22. See 3.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

C	A	P	E	■	D	I	S	A	R	M	E	D
A	■	R	■	V	■	N	■	S	■	A	■	■
P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S	■	D	R	E	H
■	■	Y	■	N	■	E	■	S	K	■	A	■
C	■	■	A	D	O	R	A	T	I	O	N	S
U	■	■	■	■	■	R	■	I	■	F	■	H
R	■	■	S	W	O	O	P	E	D	■	■	I
L	■	Y	■	A	■	G	■	■	■	■	■	N
I	N	F	O	R	M	A	L	L	Y	■	■	G
N	■	I	■	M	■	T	■	U	■	T	■	■
G	O	T	H	■	R	I	C	K	S	H	A	W
■	■	O	■	A	■	O	■	E	■	O	■	E
P	E	N	C	H	A	N	T	■	S	M	E	E

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

[We regret that our contributor, Cynicus, has had to relinquish the City page on taking up a Government appointment.—Ed., N.S. & N.]

THE CITY AND THE WAR—A FORECAST FOR ORDINARY SHARES—"SHELTER" FOR THE INVESTOR

It is pretty uncomfortable doing business in the City after the Great Fire of London. Although most of the offices in the financial quarter are undamaged, we have to go elsewhere to telephone. Not that anyone grumbles at a war inconvenience. The only complaints I heard this week were directed at the Stock Exchange Committee for their obstructiveness in closing the House during the day-time alerts, which have started up again, and sending members into the streets or back to telephoneless offices. Do they refuse to have spotters on the Stock Exchange roof just because it is made of glass? Do they think there is more danger of a spotter falling through the glass than of a bomb? If so, why not keep the House open and ask a spotter on a neighbouring roof to stand sentinel? The Stock Exchange is surely no more vulnerable than a glass-roofed railway station.

* * *

There is an air of unreality to-day about most things in the City. The financial institutions make great efforts to carry on their business normally, although it may be totally parasitic or redundant to the war effort. They steadfastly refuse to recognise the changes in our economic system which total war demands, and go on hoping that peace will be restored before the nation wakes up and asks them to justify their existence. The Stock Exchange pretends that the public is still interested in its markets, but it knows that if the insurance companies did not give it bread-and-butter business most stockbrokers would have to close their doors. A market in capital stocks must, of course, always remain, if only to enable deceased estates to be liquidated, but it is no longer necessary for raising finance in this sort of war, seeing that the Government appeals direct to the new possessors of savings through the medium of "tap" issues of Savings Bonds. The usefulness of the City as a financial machine has sadly declined since the days of the Boer War, and even Colonel Blimp may question the wisdom of putting his duller or younger son on the Stock Exchange when the war ends.

* * *

If you will tell me the length of the war, I will tell you the course of events on the Stock Exchange in 1941. If public opinion is so cheered by the defeat of Italy as to hold to the idea that the war will be over before 1942, ordinary shares will continue their recovery. Between March and June last year ordinary shares fell rapidly because an invasion was feared and a long war was contemplated. During December they began to recover, and have since regained two-thirds of their March–June fall. If they were to break through their previous 1940 high, it would mean that the Stock Exchange was discounting an early victory. Personally, I think it would be foolishly optimistic. We have not yet felt the full blast of the German war machine, though we have had some uncomfortable moments in the air. If we are to see another attempt at invasion, and the hopes of peace fading with 1942, then ordinary shares will fall under the depressing influence of declining net profits and reduced dividends. The investor must sooner or later realise that, if the war is prolonged, increasing taxation, the restriction of trade in consumer goods to 25 per cent. or 30 per cent. of the former turnover, and the transfer of labour and plant to war contracts, in which old profit ratios disappear and a relatively meagre percentage on cost is allowed, are not conducive to good dividends or the maintenance of net revenues.

* * *

Picking out "winners" on the Stock Exchange will, therefore, be a fool's game. The investor can, of course, take refuge in the "sheltered" equities, whose profits (and dividends) are more or less guaranteed under Government contracts or agreements. Cynicus used to give a list of these "sheltered" equities—the home railways, Tate and Lyle, British Sugar, the Rhodesian copper companies, Amalgamated Metal, tin mines, British Aluminium, tobacco companies, millers, and perhaps I should now add United Dairies and the cement companies. The only trouble is that the Government may at some time alter the base of the various agreements or contracts and deprive the investor of the "shelter" now afforded. The home railway agreement, for example, cannot be maintained much longer, and if there is any increase in the National Defence Contribution, as there should be, the tobacco companies and other consumer trades not vulnerable to E.P.T. may not escape so lightly in taxation. But apart from these "sheltered" equities, which are worth holding if the dividend yield is over 5½ per cent., I cannot see much sense in backing the ordinary share market at all—unless you are prepared to gamble on a short war.

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If you are interested in writing as an extra source of income you should not fail to get a copy of "How to Succeed as a Writer."

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(d) **Opportunities in Women's Journalism.**
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SUSSEX. Lady farmer offers simple accommodation. Write Nore Farm, Blackham, Tunbridge Wells.

ROCKINGHAM, Westward Ho! Devon. Quiet, comf. hse., peaceful sur. Mod. inc. terms. Miss Foll. Northam 183.

UNFURNISHED accommodation offered in doctor's house, rural Suffolk. Thatcher, Dallinghoo Rectory.

MODERN small hotel. White Lodge Hotel, Saltdean, Sussex. Rottingdean 9614.

BUSINESS woman seeks wartime home with London family, quiet area. State full details of accommodation and terms to Box 8459.

ACCOMMODATION—continued

YOUNG man (Hungarian) wishes join modest home, London area. State terms. Urgent. Box 8448.

LABOUR Candidate and wife, bombed out, require either 1/2 furnished rooms (with bath, board or kitchen facilities, 'phone) or 4/8 unfurnished. Would be active worker in local Party. Bucks, Beds or Herts. Information to: Austen, "Thisley," Gosmore, Hitchin, Herts. ('Phone: 117.)

TO LET

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NEW STATESMAN AND NATION